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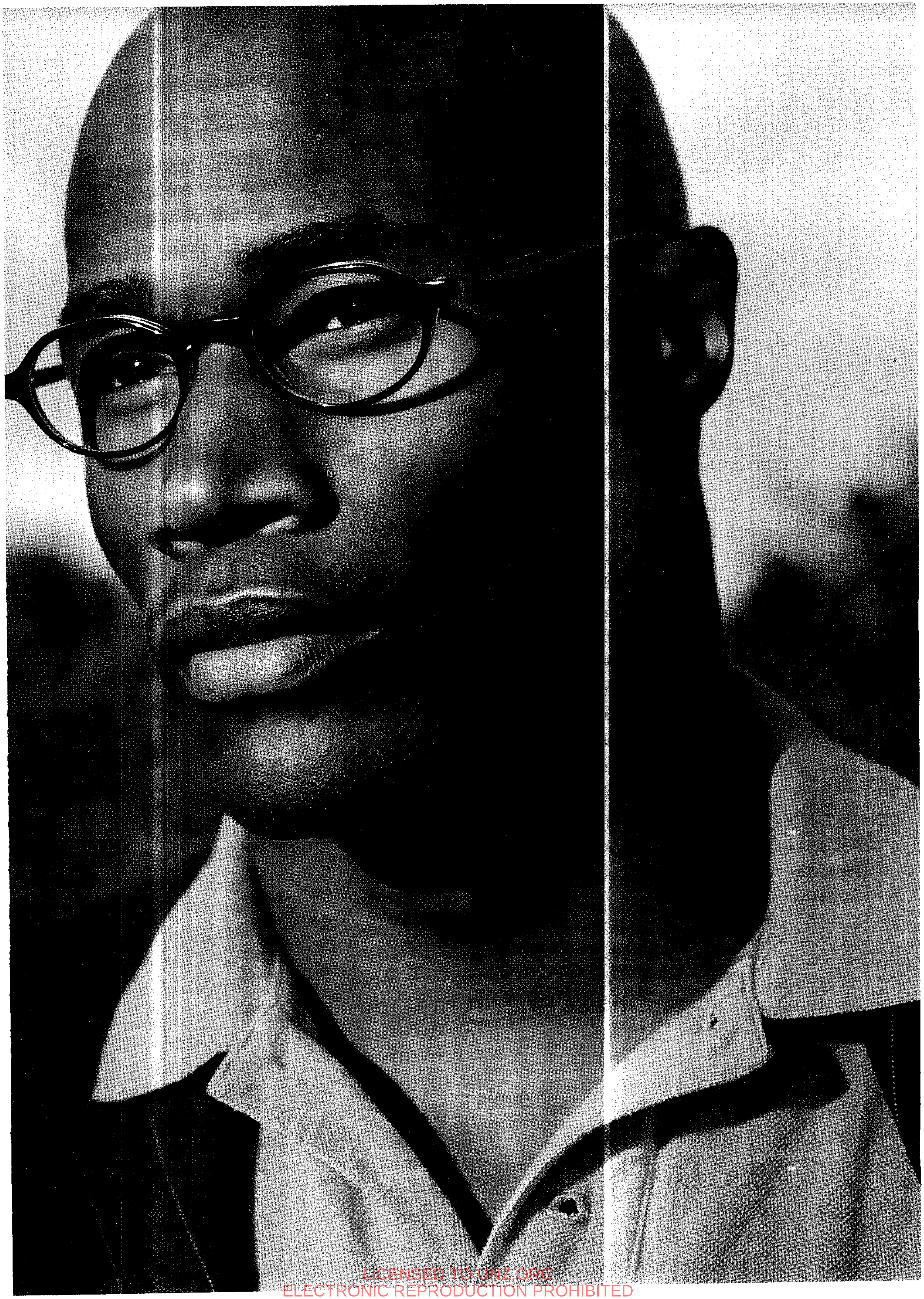

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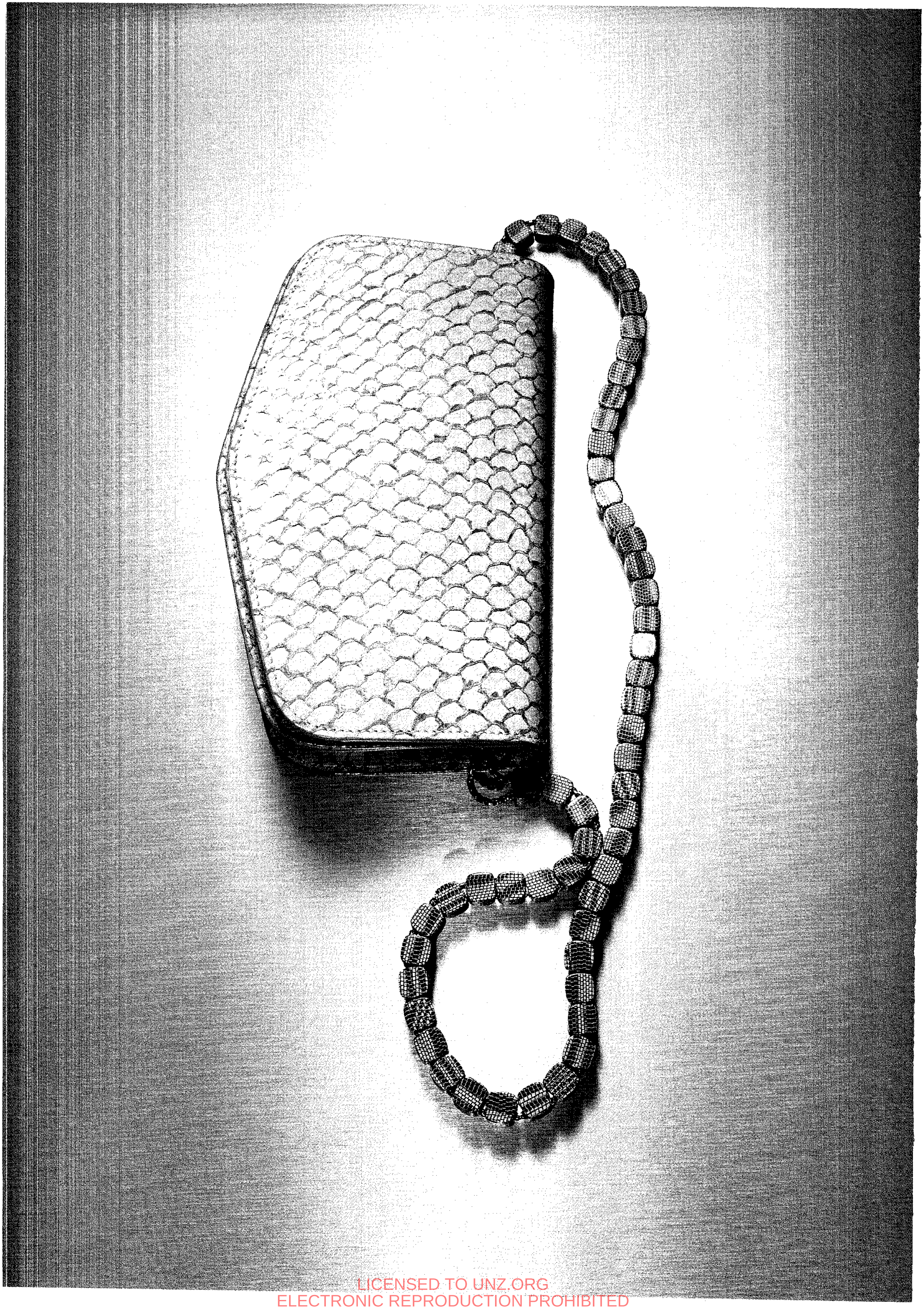

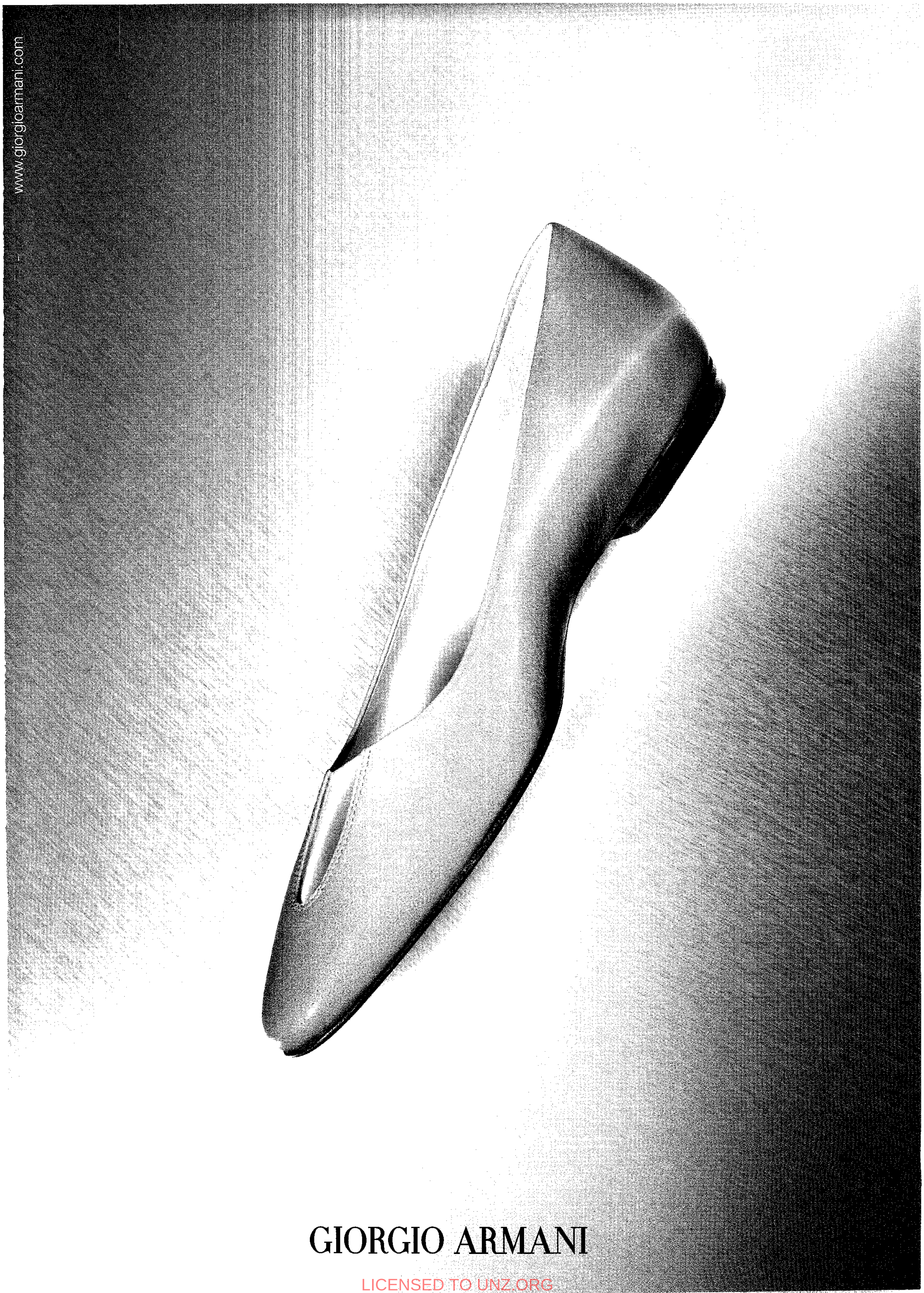

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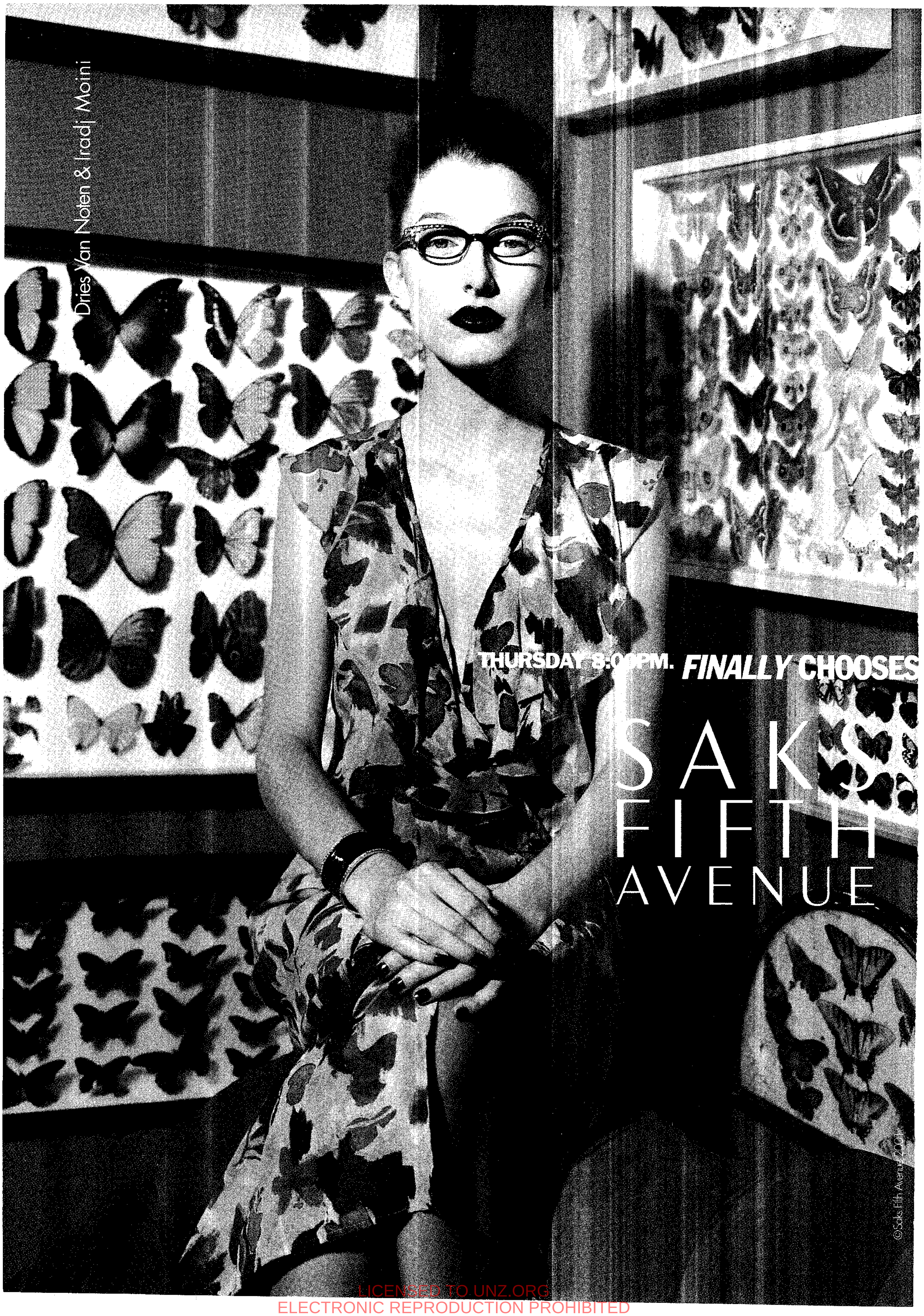
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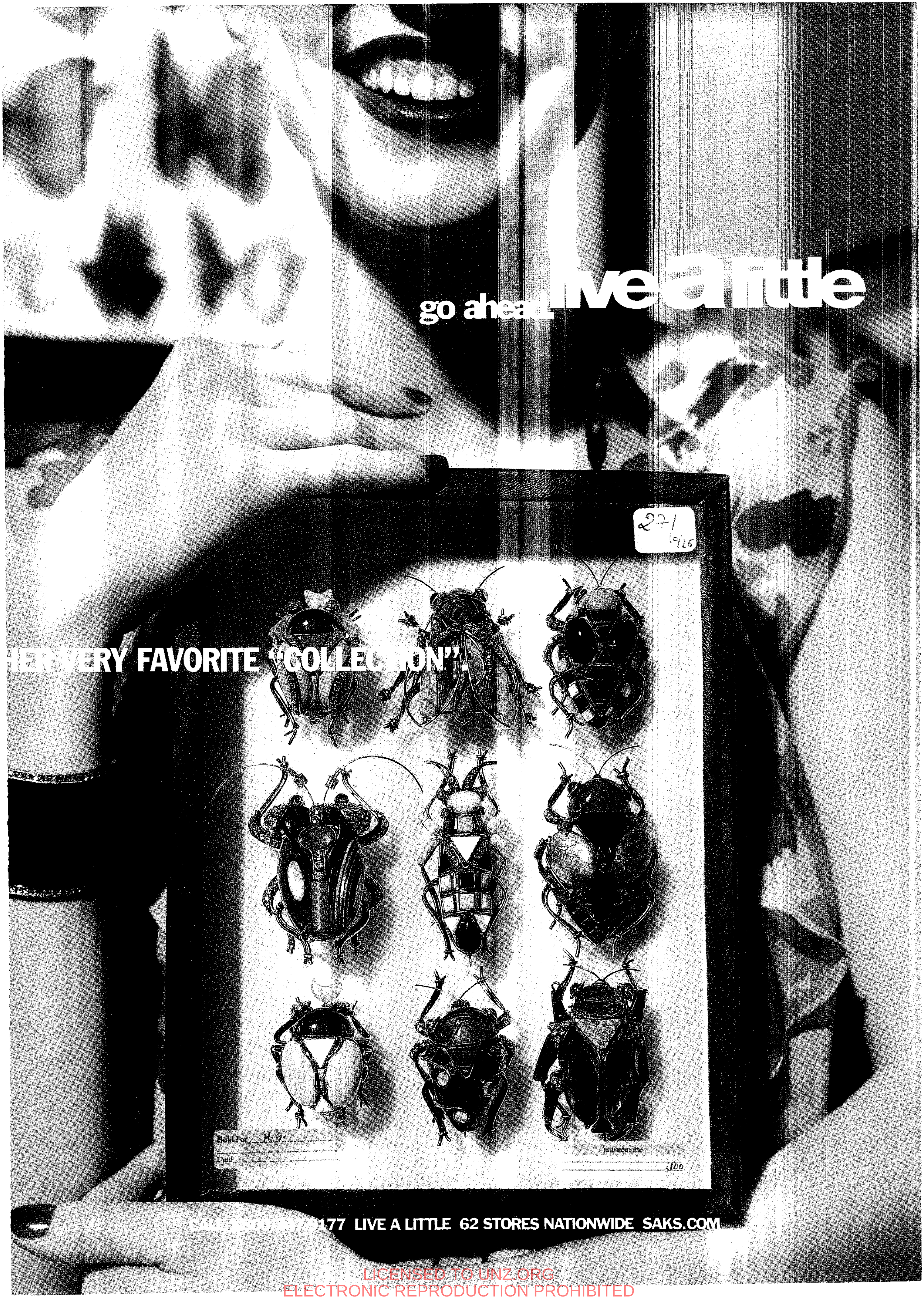
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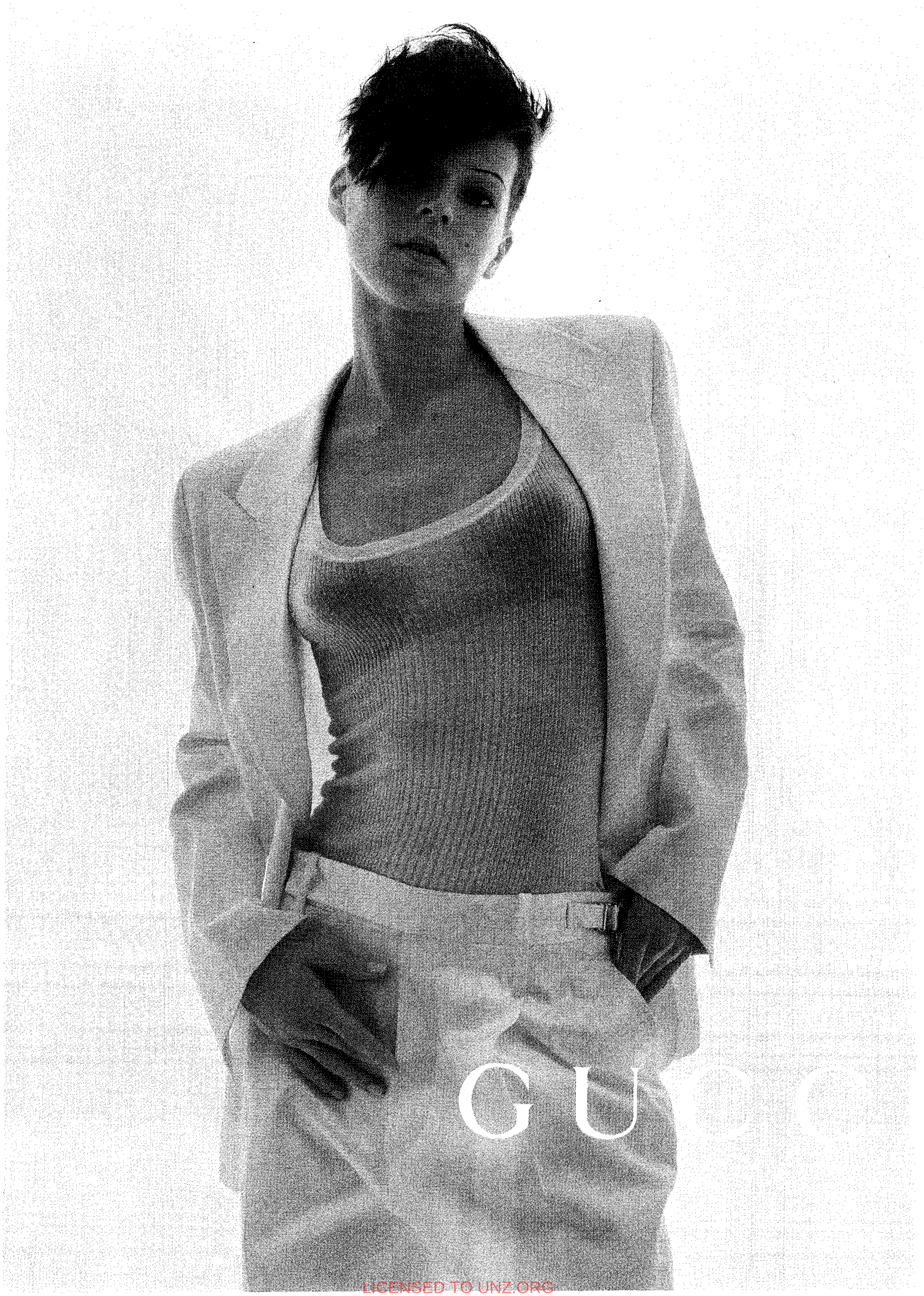
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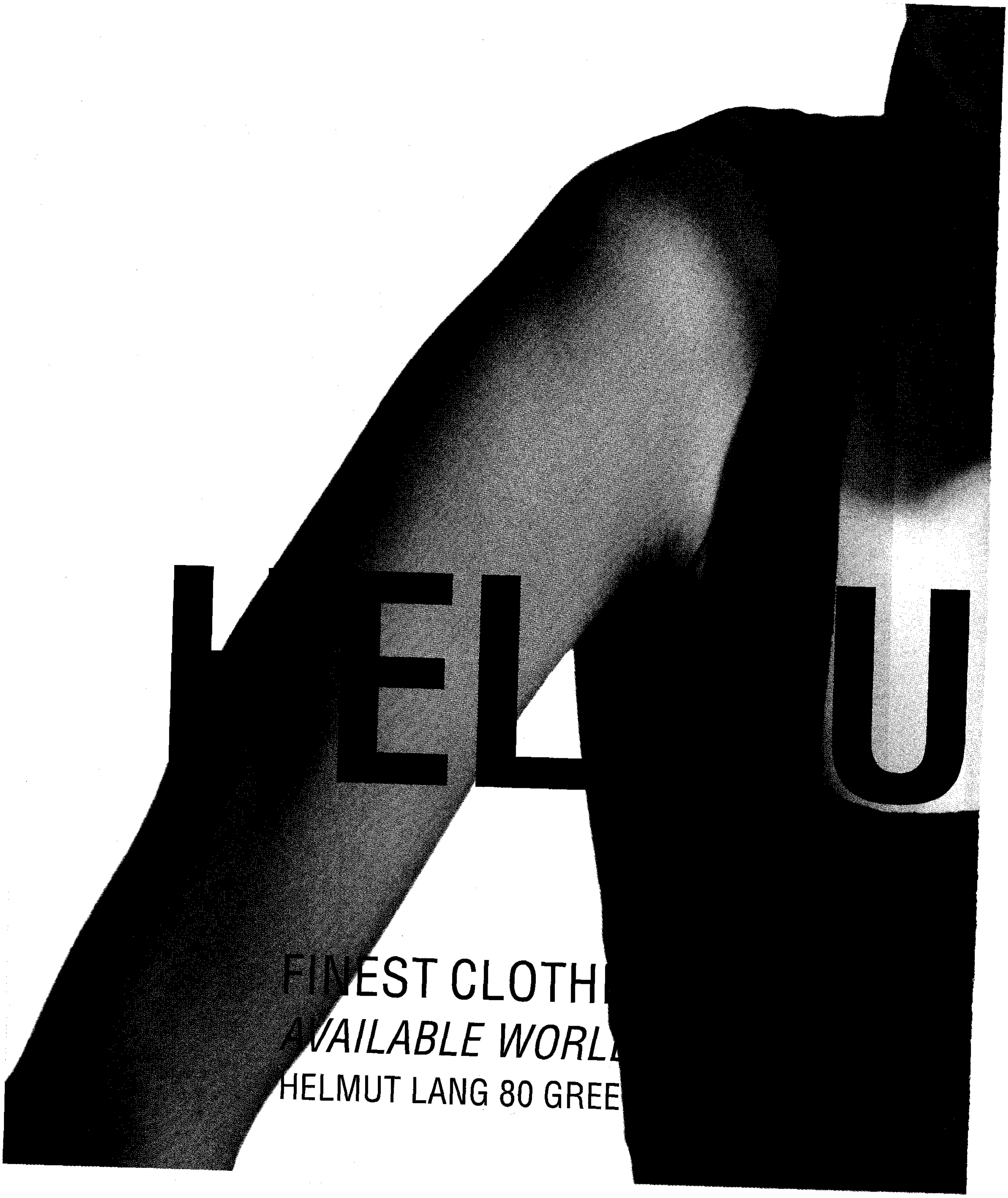
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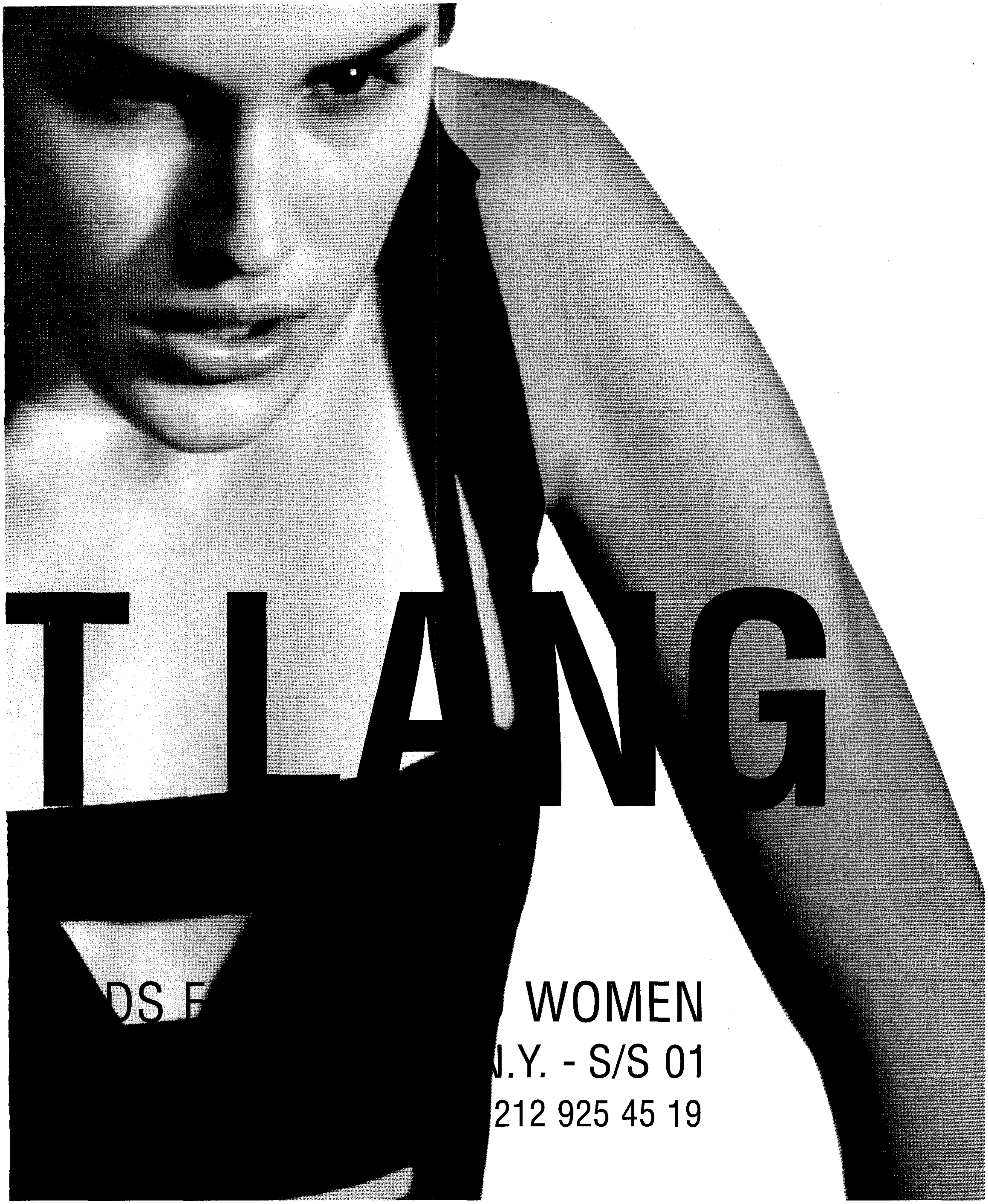
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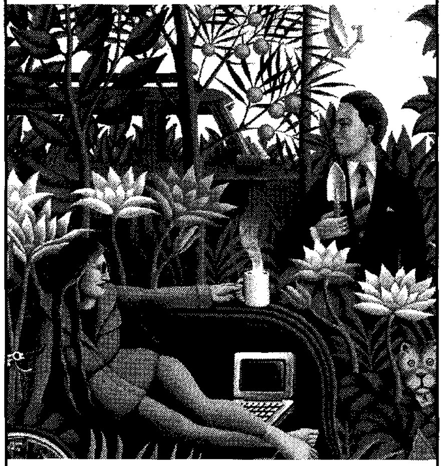

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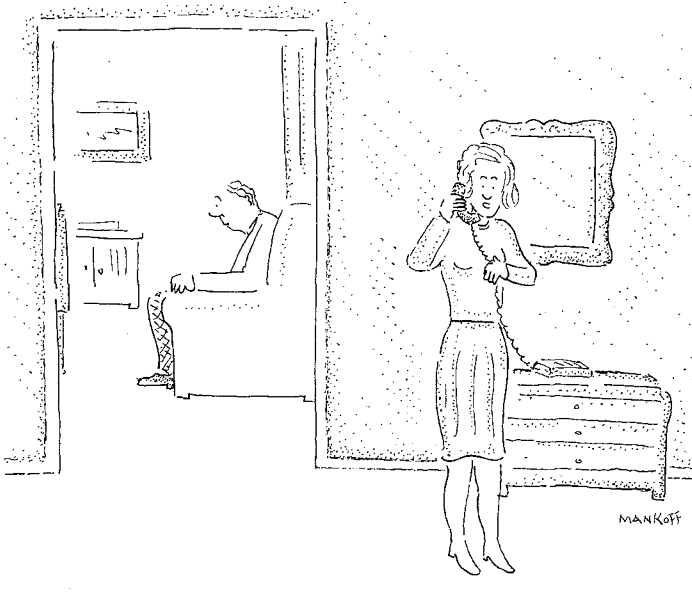

"We'd love to come, but the weathermongers have paralyzed us with fear."

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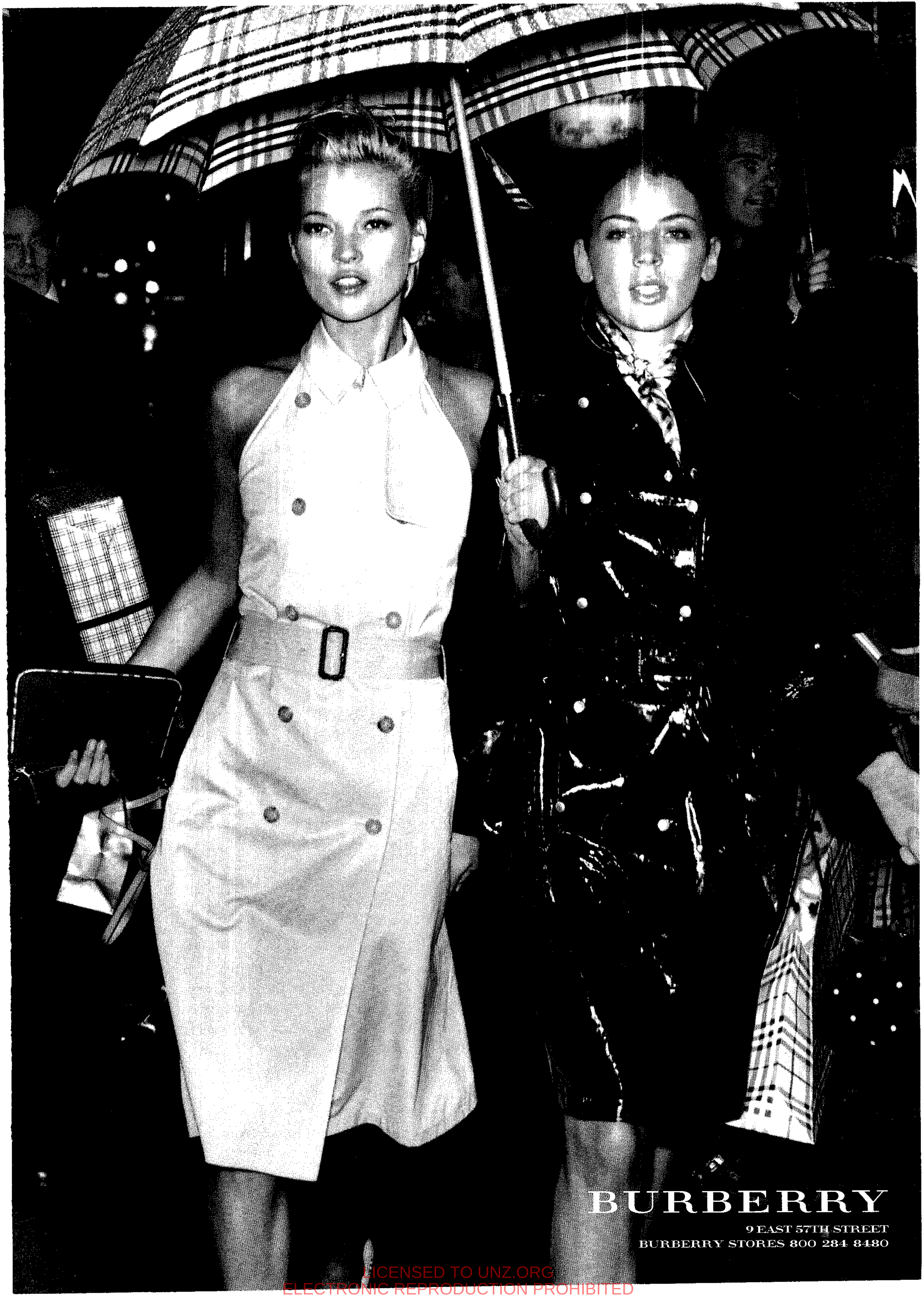

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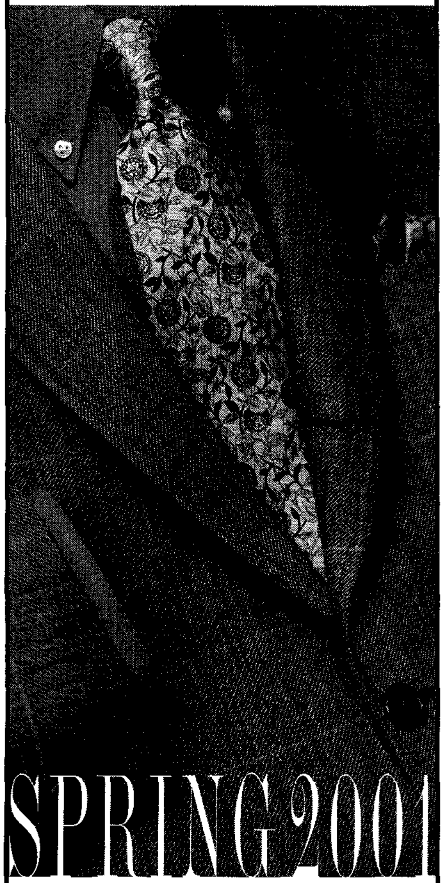

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WHAT MARTHA KNEW

In her look at the fight for control of Martha Graham's legacy, Joan Acocella identifies larger issues for dance: those of authorship, of preservation, and of who, really, owns a dance ("The Flame," February 19th & 26th). Having performed with Graham for a decade of my youth, during her extreme years in the nineteen-fifties and sixties, I would agree with Acocella's suggestion that Graham herself would not have cared about such big questions, for reasons that had as much to do with her character as with the state of dance at that time. Graham moved on relentlessly and often ruthlessly, leaving everyone else behind. Her gift was her ability to provoke her dancers' sense of the immediate; she made each of us feel that we uniquely embodied her passion. Our challenge, she told us, was "to be born into the instant." But she also left a curse on those dancers who got lost in a futile attempt to fix their own specific moment in time, as though it were an object to which they had the sole right. This strategy may have worked for Graham in her lifetime, but those who regard it as the only truth she had to convey may find, when the battle over her work is settled, that they are left with not much more than her name.

Marnie Thomas
Director of Dance
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, Calif.

ADA'S RECKONING

Jim Holt makes it clear, in his review of "The Bride of Science," that the popular image of Ada Lovelace, Byron's daughter, as the first computer programmer is as romantic as her father's poetry (Books, March 5th). It would be wrong, however, to dismiss her contribution entirely. The very fact that, more than a hundred years later, Alan Turing used "Lady Lovelace's objection" to sum up doubts about the possibility of artificial intelligence speaks volumes about Ada's importance as one of the first to think and write intelligently about the new technology. Perhaps it's time to re-canonize Lady Lovelace—this time not as the progenitor of today's software engineer but as the patron saint of technical writers. She may have struggled with algebra, but the "poetical conceits" contained in her notes on Babbage's Analytical Engine, which, as Holt writes, were hers alone, would surely be admired by anyone who has struggled to make an engineer's "cabalistic symbols" more intelligible, and palatable, to the uninitiated.

Buzz Andersen
Lakewood, Colo.

TOO MANY CALIFORNIANS?

James Surowiecki's comparison of electricity deregulation in California and Pennsylvania missed a crucial point of contrast: California's unsustainable growth (The Talk of the Town, February 12th). Over the past twenty years, its population rose by ten million, to almost thirty-four million, an increase of forty-three per cent. At the same time, Pennsylvania's population grew by just four hundred thousand, or three and a half per cent. Huge increases in population require huge increases in resources. The issue of population growth tends to be left unexamined, because it gets mixed up with larger controversies about immigration, race, or—as with the Okie migration in the dust-bowl years—economic dislocation. But it needs to be discussed, and soon. It was, in the end, Pennsylvania's stable numbers and diversified economy, and not a wise and efficient government policy, that saved it from California's fate.

Thomas Borawski
Philadelphia, Pa.

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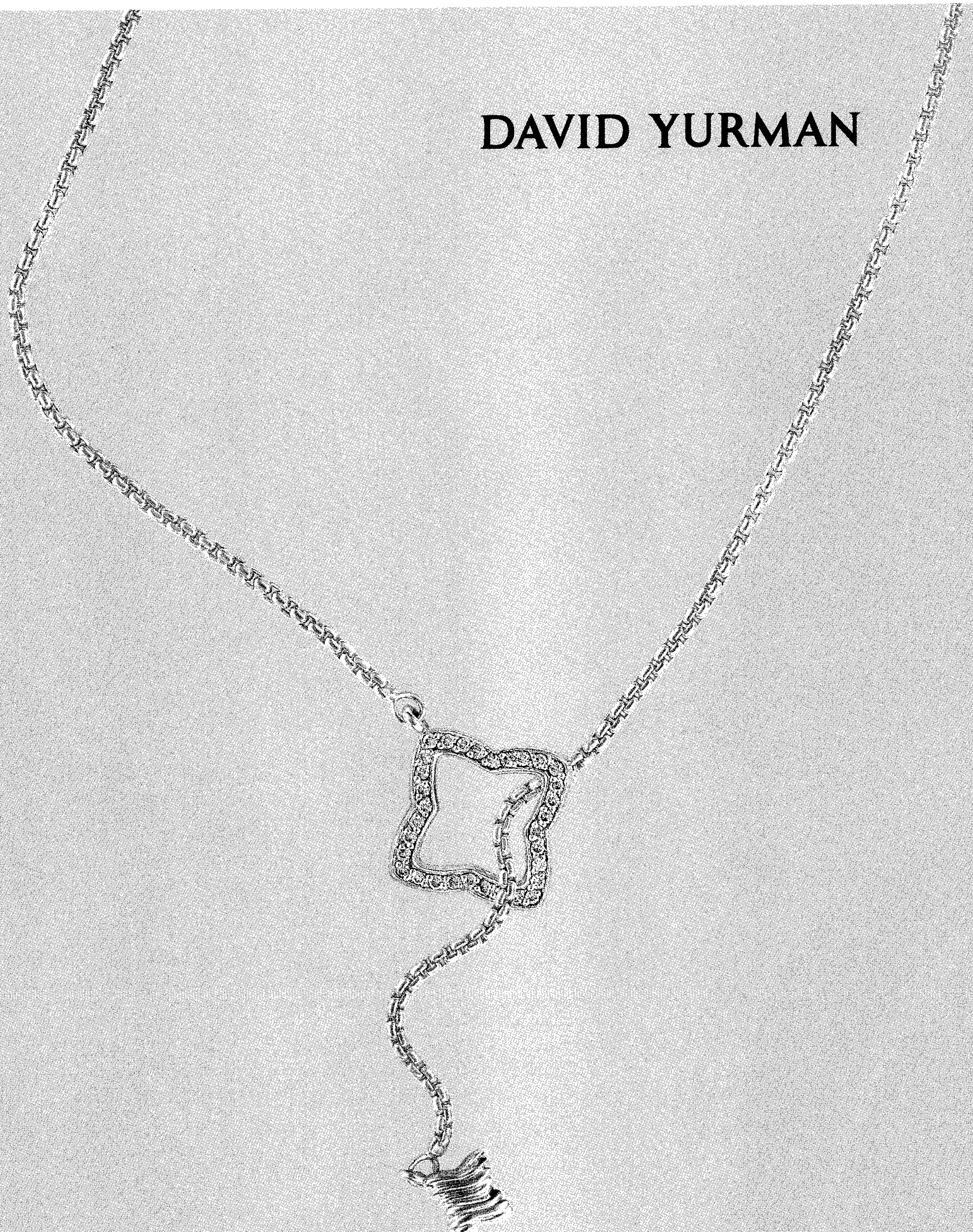

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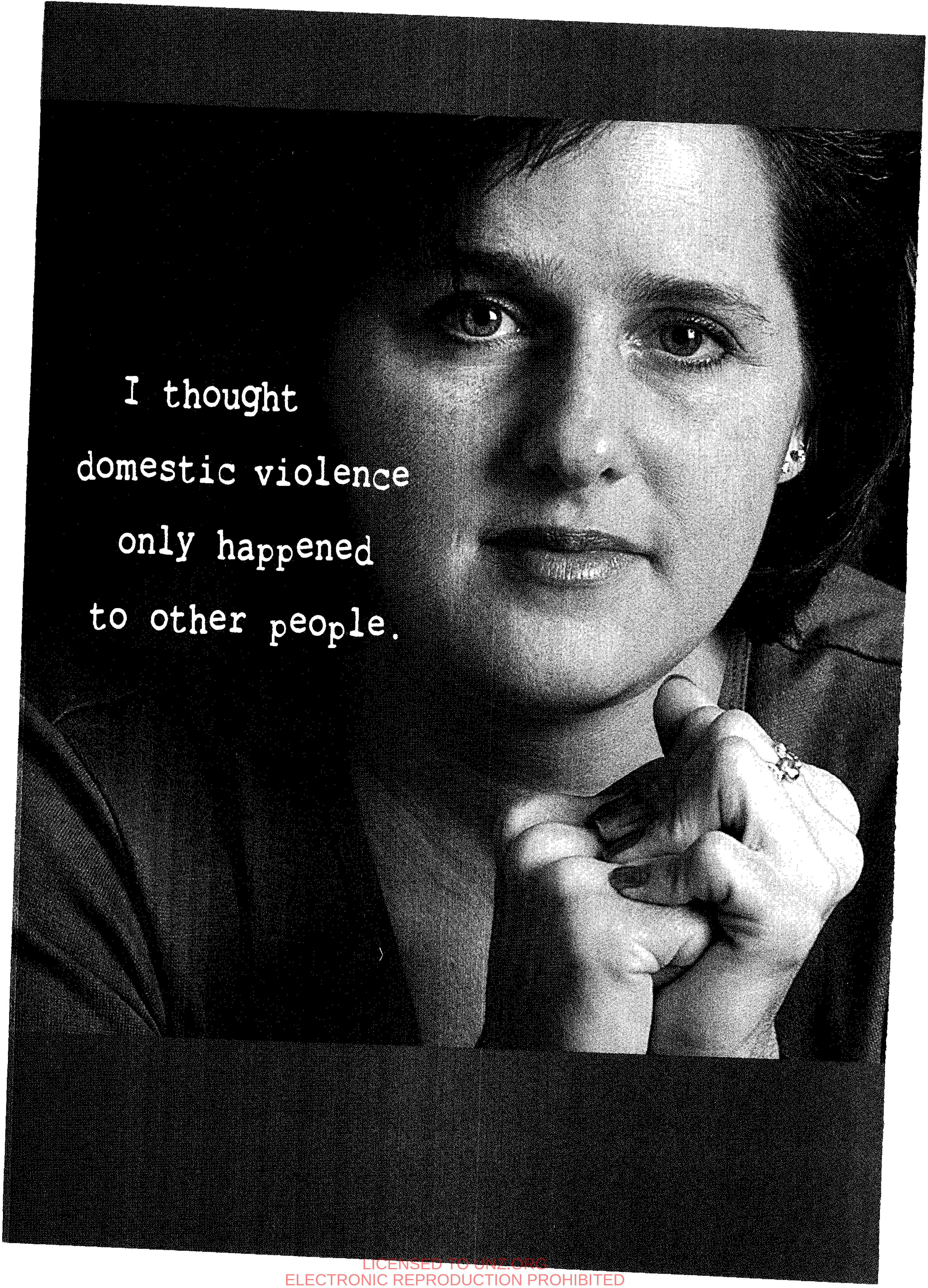
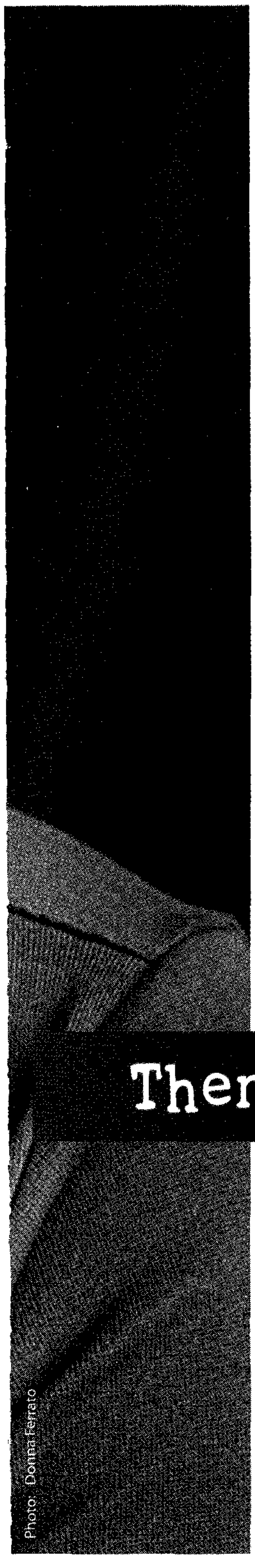

I thought
domestic violence
only happened
to other people.

HELPING END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE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When Shari's "perfect" boyfriend turned violent, she felt trapped, alone and worthless.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS & PREVIEWS

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BAT BOY: THE MUSICAL
A musical inspired by a tabloid story about a half-boy, half-nocturnal flying mammal. Written by Keythe Farley and Brian Flemming, with music and lyrics by Laurence O'Keefe. In previews. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

BELLS ARE RINGING
Faith Prince and Marc Kudisch lead the cast in a revival of the 1956 Betty Comden–Adolph Green–Jules Styne musical about a telephone operator who falls for a playwright. Tina Landau is the director. In previews. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE BOOK OF LIZ
The Drama Dept. presents a new comedy by the Talent Family (David and Amy Sedaris), about an unappreciated nun who flees her conventional life. In previews. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. 239-6200.)

DESIGN FOR LIVING
Alan Cumming, Jennifer Ehle, and Dominic West are the dissolute trio in Noel Coward's 1932 comedy. Joe Mantello is the director. Two previews on March 14. Opens March 15 at 7. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 719-1300.)

FOLLIES
A Roundabout Theatre Company revival of James Goldman and Stephen Sondheim's 1971 musical, starring Blythe Danner, Gregory Harrison, Judith Ivey, and Treat Williams. Matthew Warchus is the director. In previews. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

IN DREAMS AND GIMPEL
An evening of plays adapted from two short stories, Isaac Bashevis Singer's "Gimpel the Fool" and Delmore Schwartz's "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities," both starring David Margulies. In previews through March 18. Opens March 19 at 8. (Maverick, 307 W. 26th St. 239-6200.)

THE INVENTION OF LOVE
Tom Stoppard's latest play stars Richard Easton and Robert Sean Leonard, who portray the poet A. E. Housman at the end of his life and as a young man. Jack O'Brien is the director. In previews. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

JUDGMENT AT NUREMBERG
Maximilian Schell and George Grizzard lead the cast in the Abby Mann drama. John Tillinger is the director. In previews. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6280.)

NEWYORKERS
A satirical revue about life in Manhattan, by Glenn Slater (lyrics) and Stephen Weiner (music). Christopher Ashley is the director. In previews through March 18. Opens March 20 at 7:30. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

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ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST
From Chicago, a Steppenwolf Theatre revival of Dale Wasserman's adaptation of the 1962 Ken Kesey novel, starring Gary Sinise. Terry Kinney is the director. Previews begin March 16. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

SERVICEMEN
From the New Group, a drama by Evan Smith, about a socialite and a playboy who frequent the hangouts of departing enlisted men in New York during the Second World War. In previews. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

STARMITES 2001
A revival of the 1989 sci-fi comic-book musical by Barry Keating and Stuart Ross. Mr. Keating is the director. In previews. (Theatre 3, at 311 W. 43rd St. 206-1515.)

UP AGAINST THE WIND
New York Theatre Workshop presents a rap-poetry play about the life of Tupac Shakur, written by Michael Develle Winn. Previews begin March 16. (79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

OPENED RECENTLY

BOBBIE BOLAND
A former beauty queen goes into battle mode when a younger woman pursues her husband, in a comedy by Nancy Hasty set in nineteen-sixties Florida. (Arclight, 152 W. 71st St. 279-4200.)

BOY GETS GIRL
Rebecca Gilman's latest play deals with a journalist whose life is turned upside down after she rejects a blind date. (Reviewed in our issue of 3/5/01.) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

CARTAS: A NUN IN LOVE
A stage adaptation of the seventeenth-century "Lettres de la Religieuse Portugaise," said to be correspondence from a Portuguese nun to a French officer who deserted her, translated and performed by Myriam Cyr. (45 Bleecker Theatre, at 45 Bleecker St. 529-4530.)

A CLASS ACT
Ed Kleban's life following his success as the lyricist of "A Chorus Line" is the basis of this musical. With songs by Mr. Kleban and a book by Linda Kline and Lonny Price. Mr. Price is the director. (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

THE DINNER PARTY
Neil Simon's new comedy, set in an opulent restaurant in Paris, is essentially traditional fare; the running, or limping, gags are in ready supply, and the secondhand shtick, often in the form of aeons-old alimony jokes, flows freely along this Boulevard of Broken Marriages. (11/6/00) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

DOGEATERS
Jessica Hagedorn's play, based on her 1990 novel of the same title. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200. Closes March 18.)

THE FLORIDA PROJECT
Alligator wrestlers and mermaids collide in Tory Vazquez's play with dance, starring Juliana Francis and Richard Maxwell. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Closes March 18.)

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 2001: A SPOOF ODYSSEY
These days, ridiculing Broadway is like shooting fish in a barrel, so it's amazing that the latest version of Gerard Alessandrini's long-running satirical revue manages to fire off as many good ones as it does. Thank goodness the wonderful Christine Pedi is still in the show; her loopy, loving imitations of yesteryear's biggies—Elaine Stritch, Liza Minnelli, Ethel Merman, and Barbra Streisand—are more than worth the trip and the price of a ticket. (Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200.)

THE FULL MONTY
Terrence McNally and David Yazbek's musical version of the 1997 movie, about a group of unemployed factory workers who try to earn some cash by stripping, has all the spirit and charm of the original but on a much larger, pizzazzier scale. If you don't find yourself laughing consistently (and tearing up occasionally), well, then, maybe you don't *deserve* to see six men prancing around in red G-strings. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

THE GOOD THIEF
Brian D'Arcy James portrays a petty criminal who botches a heist, in a drama by Conor McPherson. (José Quintero Theatre, 534 W. 42nd St. 560-7284.)

HIGH DIVE
In her one-woman comedy, Leslie Ayvazian uses a vacation in Greece, during which she attempted to jump off a high diving board, as, quite literally, a springboard to discuss her life, career, and family as she approaches fifty. Ayvazian has an exuberant demeanor, and her crisp comic delivery only enhances the play's many charms (which include riffs on disastrous vacations and her obsession with "The $25,000

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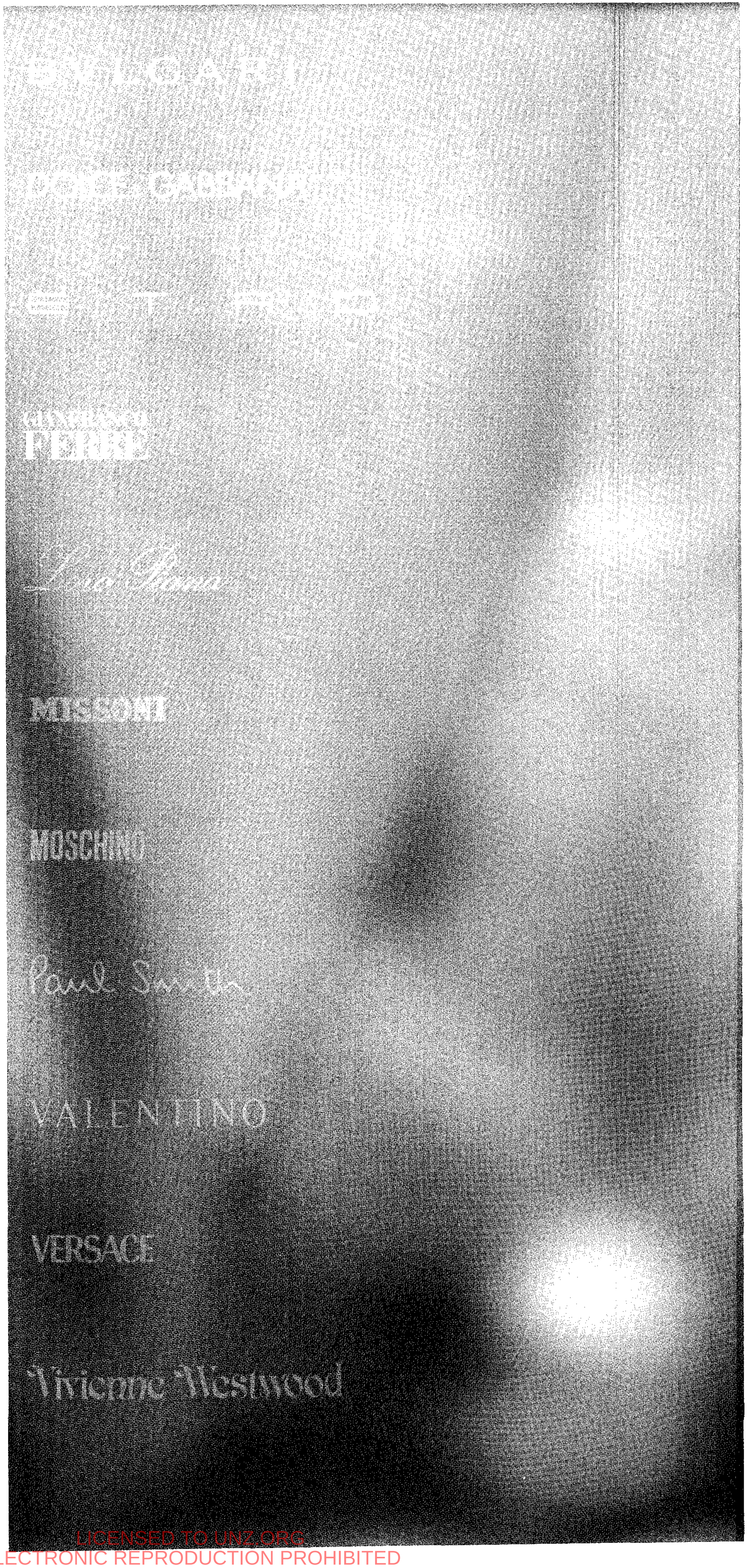
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Pyramid"). On top of it all, Ayvazian gives audience members the opportunity to read minor roles from their seats, which lends this show a fresh, improvisational quality that many solo pieces lack. (MCC Theatre, 120 W. 28th St. 727-7765. Closes March 25.)

IF IT WAS EASY . . .
In Ward Morehouse III and Stewart F. Lane's backstage comedy, the Mob offers hard-to-refuse financial help to the producers of a show called "Sinatra: The Musical." (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

ISN'T IT ROMANTIC
The Worth Street Theatre Company's staging of Wendy Wasserstein's 1983 comedy, directed by Jeff Cohen. (Tribeca Playhouse, 111 Reade St., at West Broadway. 206-1515. Closes April 1.)

I WILL BEAR WITNESS
A stage version of the diaries of Victor Klemperer, a German Jew who recorded his life under the Third Reich. George Bartenieff, who portrays Klemperer, and Karen Malpede, who directs, collaborated on the adaptation. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

JANE EYRE
John Caird and Paul Gordon's musical is respectful of and faithful to Brontë's original, but it needs to be brilliant and piercing, and it isn't. Though the show's book is a fair job, the music is schmaltzy, and the modern stage devices—the endless projections of trees and sky may make you feel like you're watching the Weather Channel—don't quite bring Brontë to life. The appealing cast is led by Marla Schaffel, who is the very picture of the Jane Eyre in your mind's eye. Directed by Mr. Caird and Scott Schwartz. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

LEAVING QUEENS
Kate Moira Ryan and Kim D. Sherman's musical traces three generations of an Irish-American family living in New York City. (Women's Project Theatre, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200. Closes March 18.)

LOBBY HERO
A new play by Kenneth Lonergan, about a security guard, his supervisor, two cops, and a murder investigation. Mark Brokaw is the director. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

MOMMA
In her one-woman show, Siobhan Fallon portrays a bus driver from rural New York who travels to Manhattan to visit a fertility herbalist. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 239-6200. Closes March 24.)

NOW THAT COMMUNISM IS DEAD, MY LIFE FEELS EMPTY
Richard Foreman's forty-eighth play has many of the whacked-out elements audiences have come to expect from the father of downtown theatre—a disorienting set loaded with veiled signifiers, nubile women whose semi-sadomasochistic garb is offset by intellectual-nerd glasses; a gorilla; an outright air of menace; and characters who seem both alienated and—especially lately—somehow perfectly at home in it all. Foreman's plays used to be an enigmatic, exhilarating blow to the brain. With this latest work, the formula has got so comfortable that it seems like shtick. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)

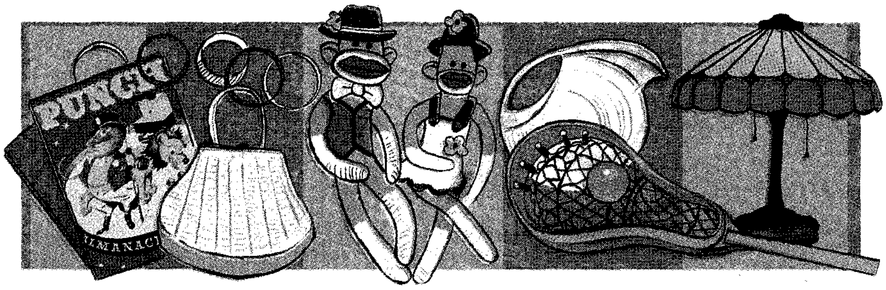
THE PLAY ABOUT THE BABY
In Edward Albee's new play, an older couple provide a harsh taste of what life has in store for a young couple with a new baby: the ravages of adulthood, the tidal wave of troubles and injuries that come with time. Brian Murray and Marian Seldes, two veterans who are rarely less than riveting, make the most of Albee's sharp, enigmatic writing; their highly stylized, virtuosic performances here are stunning. David Esbjornson directed. (2/19 & 26/01) (Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

PROOF
The young playwright David Auburn's drama about the possible link between genius and mental illness stars Mary-Louise Parker as the daughter of a brilliant but unstable University of Chicago mathematician. Parker's character appears to have similar gifts and, possibly, similar troubles. Auburn has real depth and a real voice, and he has taken on some biggies here, but in the end you wish the play were a little richer, a little less simply resolved. Directed by Daniel Sullivan. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

ON AND OFF THE AVENUE

Pier Counselling

If you are nursing a cup of coffee early next Saturday morning at the Munson Diner, the cabdriver hangout on Eleventh Avenue, and you happen to glance out the window, you will see a curious procession along Forty-ninth Street: weekend collectors sporting cashmere balmacaans and Vuitton totes and grizzled pros in oily ulsters clutching empty canvas backpacks. All these pilgrims are headed for the spring edition of the **TRIPLE PIER EXPO**, the antique show on the Hudson River, which runs the last two weekends in March, and all are nourishing a common fantasy: they hope to find a million-dollar baby in a five-and-ten-cent store.



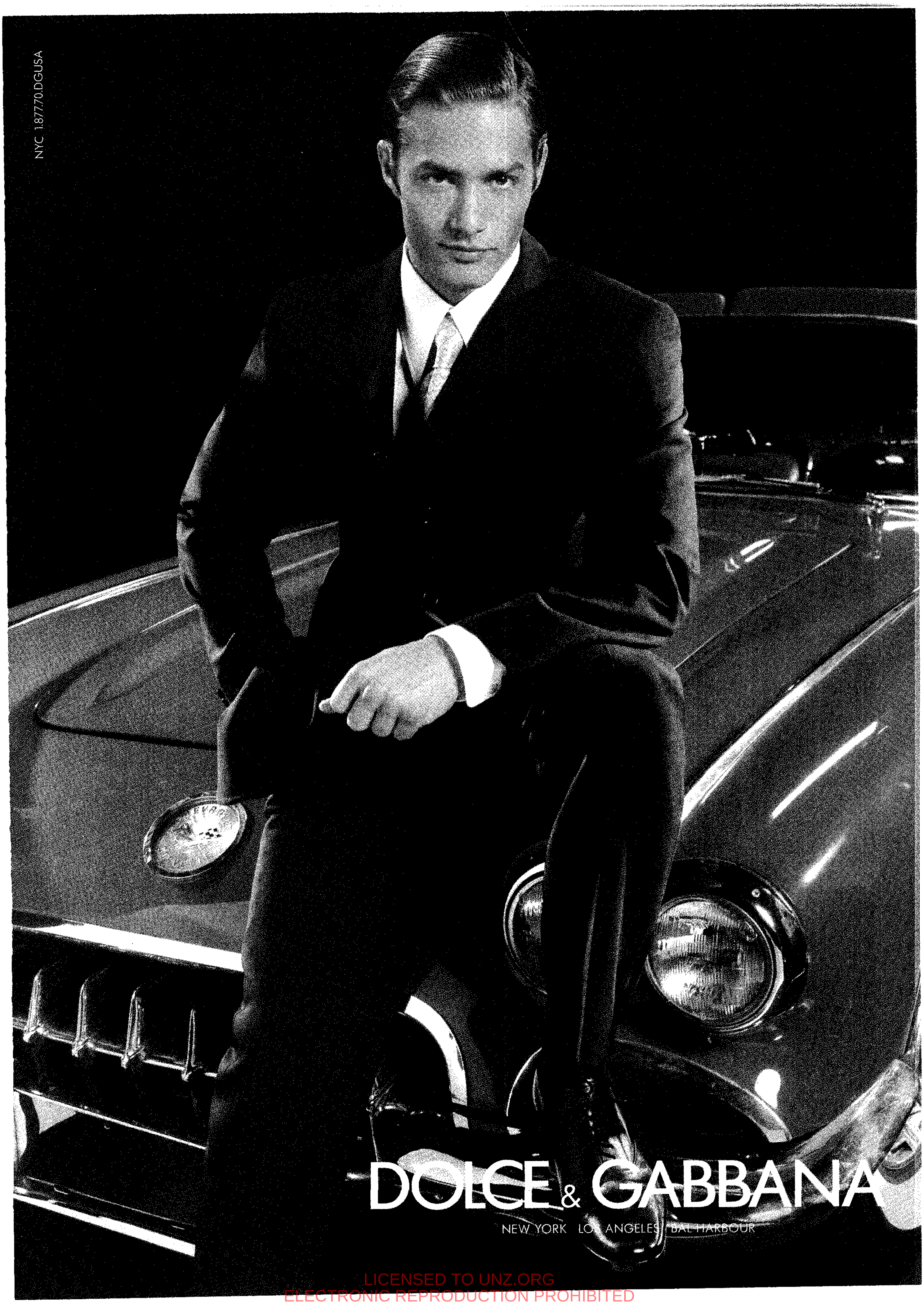
EDEL RODRIGUEZ

If the pier show, with its six hundred-odd dealers, excites this kind of optimism in antique collectors, it's probably because the event is as close as Manhattan comes to the kind of extravaganza which periodically fills farm fields in towns like Brimfield, Massachusetts, and Kutztown, Pennsylvania. Friendlier by far than the meticulously vetted shows at the Park Avenue Armory, not nearly as funky as the vast flea market that camps every weekend in the vicinity of Twenty-sixth Street and Sixth Avenue, the pier show has an appeal that derives largely from the fact that it is really three separate shows rolled into one.

PIER 88, with its lineup of "20th Century Collectibles," may be the goofiest and least reverent of the piers: even when the music in the lobby is silenced, the offerings—Lucite purses and poodle skirts, Fiesta pitchers and Bakelite bracelets—have a bright rhythm of their own. But the other two piers are idiosyncratic in their own right. On **PIER 90**, which the show's promoters have dubbed the "Decorative Arts & Americana" pier, the panoply can easily encompass not just butter churns and Lloyd Loom rockers but the World's Fair ephemera at Ken Schultz's capacious booth. And **PIER 92**, far and away the ritziest outpost, isn't all that predictable. For the most part it's a sophisticated venue glittering with Handel lamps, Aubusson carpets, Folies-Bergère posters, Art Deco watches (check Time on My Hands' showcase), and trifles from the houses of Asprey and Cartier, Tiffany and Steuben. But even here, you'll find that the tables in the back, near the snack bar, are often surprisingly spirited, displaying an errant sock monkey or a waterlogged copy of *Punch* just a few feet from the Belter divans.

All this infinite variety can have consequences. By mid-morning, even the most confident shopper can fall into a dither, unable to decide between a lava cameo and a lacrosse stick. As the hours drift by, many early starters sink into a reverie: so hypnotic is the presence of so much memorabilia, so spectacular is the proximity of sun and river and Jersey shore, that it's easy to lapse into a dream state. Once, a few years back, the carnival Kewpies, the Princess phones and Catalin radios, the horse-hide steamer trunks and Peter Max posters were plunged into semi-darkness, and all eyes lifted from the counters and sought the cause of the eclipse. A huge ocean liner was pulling into the berth next to Pier 88. Then the ship passed, the lights inside brightened once again, and the search for Schiaparellis and stereoscopes resumed. (Triple Pier Expo, Passenger Ship Terminal, Piers 88, 90, and 92, Twelfth Ave. from 48th to 55th Sts.; 255-0020. March 17-18 and March 24-25.)

—*Lynn Yaeger*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DOLCE & GABBANA
NEW YORK LOS ANGELES BAL HARBOUR

Taraf de Haïdouks, at the Haft Auditorium (see Night Life).

R. GREGORY CHRISTIE

THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW
Rather than a revival of Richard O'Brien's 1973 musical, a glam tribute to fifties horror flicks, Christopher Ashley's production is an unsexy and oddly earnest homage to the 1975 cult-movie adaptation. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

ROSMERSHOLM
The Century Center's Ibsen series continues with the playwright's rarely produced psychological drama. (111 E. 15th St. 982-6782. Closes March 17.)

SAVED
The 1965 political drama by Edward Bond, staged by Theatre for a New Audience. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200. Closes March 18.)

THE SEARCH FOR SIGNS OF INTELLIGENT LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE
Lily Tomlin is back on Broadway in the one-woman, thirteen-character show written for her by her longtime collaborator, Jane Wagner, and what's not to love about that? Tomlin is terrific—moving, funny, and as lithe and vibrant as she was when she first performed the show here, fifteen years ago. This is a chance to see a remarkable life force in action. (11/27/00) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

SEUSSICAL
For all the whimsy of Theodor Geisel's doggerel, what's missing in this relentlessly cute musical by the team of Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty is mayhem and magic. With the exception of one gentle and winning performance—by Kevin Chamberlin as Horton the Elephant, who gets conned into hatching an egg—it's a show with curiously little charm. (12/25/00 & 1/1/01) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

A SKULL IN CONNEMARA
The second installment in the Irish playwright Martin McDonagh's Leenane trilogy. Gordon Edelstein is the director. (3/5/01) (Gramercy, 127 E. 23rd St. 777-4900.)

SUBURB
In Robert Cohen and David Javerbaum's musical, Stuart (James Ludwig) wants to leave Manhattan for the suburbs, but his wife (Jacquelyn Piro) is not so sure. It's hard to tell whether the authors intended to write a satire on the cultural divide between city and country or a relationship drama, and the cloying ballads and up-tempo songs about house buying, mallgoing, and lawn mowing inadvertently make a case for staying in—or even moving to—New York City. Only Alix Korey, as a sharky real-estate agent, overcomes the saccharine material. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 239-6200. Closes March 25.)

THE SYRINGA TREE
A tour-de-force solo drama, written by and starring South African native and first-time playwright Pamela Gien, who gives an extraordinary performance in all twenty-three roles. It's a love story, really, about the strong, lasting bond between a white girl and her black nanny in South Africa during apartheid. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 307-4100.)

THE TALE OF THE ALLERGIST'S WIFE
As Marjorie Taub, an Upper West Side culture vulture on the verge of a nervous breakdown, the dexterous Linda Lavin makes Charles Busch's satire of New York intellectual angst dazzle. In her pretentiousness, however, she is a gaudy incarnation of the boulevard's contempt for ideas. In fact, as Marjorie herself admits, she has never had "even one original thought." In this piece of slick flimflam, there is attitude but no character, laughter but no insight, action but no plot, suffering but no pain. What we have here, in other words, is a Broadway hit. (3/20/00) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

TEN UNKNOWNS
Jon Robin Baitz's new drama. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

THEATRE OF LIGHT
For this symphony of light, puppetry, and sound, Rudi Stern (whose designs in the nineteen-sixties accompanied Timothy Leary's Psychedelic Celebrations and concerts by the Doors) executes eleven different compositions, in which two thousand hand-painted slides (splashes of color, photocollages, and other abstract imagery) are flashed on three revolving disk-shaped screens, in synch with wildly eclectic music. After a while, the themeless pieces become repetitive, but when all their elements come together the effect is undeniably entrancing (and would no doubt be enhanced by mind-altering substances). (Flamboyan Theatre, Soto Velez Cultural Center, 107 Suffolk St., between Delancey and Rivington Sts. 279-4200. Closes March 31.)

URBAN ZULU MAMBO
Regina Taylor is the sole actress in this trio of piercing one-acts, which she conceived as a tribute to the black playwright Adrienne Kennedy. Taylor portrays a sharp-minded homeless woman who nonetheless converses with her dog, in "Talking to Jupiter," by Suzan-Lori Parks; an artist who idealizes a male subject from afar, in "Liliane," by Ntozake Shange; and a woman with cancer caused by a waste incinerator in her neighborhood, in Kia Corthron's "Safe Box." Taylor's electric performances, combined with the production's vivid and haunting sound, video, and lighting design, make each play a powerful experience. (Signature Theatre, 555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529. Closes March 25.)

LONG RUNS

AIDA
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4747.

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN
Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.

BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.

CABARET
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.

CHICAGO
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

CONTACT
Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.

DE LA GUARDA
Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.

DINNER WITH FRIENDS
Variety Arts, 110 Third Ave., at 14th St. 239-6200.

THE FANTASTICKS
Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.

FOSSE
Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

FULLY COMMITTED
Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.

KISS ME, KATE
Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

LES MISÉRABLES
Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

THE MUSIC MAN
Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.

TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING
St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.

THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

DANCE

MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP
The company continues its three-week Brooklyn season with two programs of repertory works. March 13 and March 16-17 at 7:30: "Four Saints in Three Acts" and "World Power." ♦ March 15 at 7:30: "Mosaic and United," "Dancing Honeymoon," "The Office," "Peccadillos," and "Grand Duo." (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Through March 25.)

ODC/SAN FRANCISCO
For some thirty years, the choreographer Brenda Way tried to avoid making work about her emotional life. But then her son was discovered to have a brain tumor, and when she entered the studio she found her usual dispassionate distance had vanished. For "Investigating Grace," she turned to her gift for formal invention, creating what she calls "the grace phrase" from the sad and unhurried two-minute aria that begins and ends Bach's Goldberg Variations. She stretched her phrase, ran it backward, and overlaid it with a complementary sequence featuring one still man at the center of a mobile crowd. "The formal constraints of the Bach gave access to emotional dimensions I wasn't particularly conscious of," Way says, and laughs with surprise. "It's amazing. It's a little miracle." So far, the investigation of grace has paid off: the most recent prognoses for her son have been hopeful. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. March 13-16 at 8.)

"OUT OF SPACE/SANCTUARY"
The choreographers Jean Vitrano and Wendy Blum share a program. Vitrano offers three solos, "In My Skin," "Sonata in F Minor," and "Love's Body"; Blum presents "My Mother's Eyeball" and "Sweet M-Balm," two parts of her upcoming evening-length trilogy, "Whimsical Bloodhound in a Vitreous Humour." (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. March 17-18 at 8:30.)

JAMES SEWELL BALLET
The choreographer and former Feld dancer Sewell founded his company here before moving it to his native Minneapolis in 1993. For its first return visit, the troupe brings "Moving Works," excerpts from "Good Mourning," and "Made in America." (Kaye Playhouse, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. March 16-17 at 8 and March 18 at 3.)

"THE ST. PATRICK PAGEANT"
The choreographer Clare Byrne reworks the legends of the anophiophilic saint in an evening-length piece that includes tango, blues, and dancing snakes. (Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer St. 718-783-2795. March 15-18 at 8.)

"TIMBERLINE"
The all-female squad Lava excels at circus skills: trapeze, tumbling, hoop diving, tightrope walking. The choreographer Sarah East Johnson gives the extravaganza the dynamics of an evening-length dance. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. March 14-18 at 8:30. Through March 25.)

"AMERICAN DELUXE"
Dean Moss's evening-length work about the implacable joy and isolation of the bully, "American Deluxe," inaugurates dance at the Smack Mellon gallery, a former spice factory that still smells sweetly of cardamom. (56 Water St., between Main and Dock Sts., Brooklyn. 718-834-8761. March 14-18 at 8.)

"CONQUEST OF THE GALAXY: JUPITER—LOVE YOU LIVE"
While Japan's original modern-dance idiom, the achingly slow Butoh, has been travelling the world for decades, the country's more recent, pop-inflected dance incarnations have mostly stayed home. But here come the Condors, twelve actors, dancers, and puppeteers from Tokyo whose surprising humor has won them something of a cult following. With a presence as ticklishly light as Pokémon or the girl band Shonen Knife, they dance like bunnies and act out rambling, delicately disjointed jokes that don't have, and don't need, a punch line. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St., at Second Ave. 752-3015. March 16-17 at 8.)

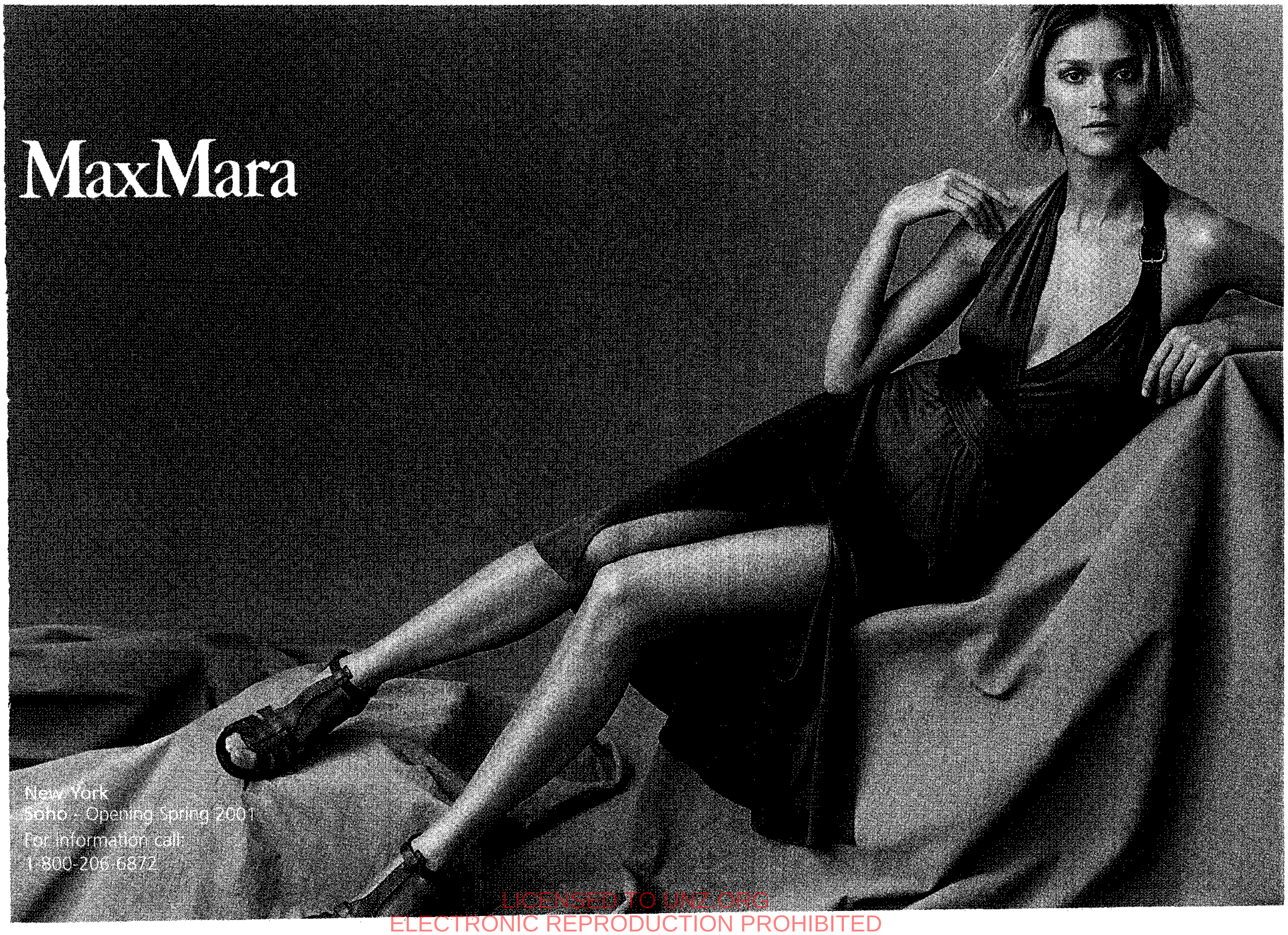
NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

AVISHAI COHEN
Judging from his work with Chick Corea's Origin band or his trio, Cohen is easily the most exciting new bassist since Christian McBride. With his own ensembles, Cohen—an Israeli—goes multicultural, melding international rhythms and textures with urban jazz. (Jazz Gallery, 290 Hudson St., near Spring St. 242-1063. March 13-14 at 9 and 10:30.)

JOE JACKSON
Returning to pop, the format that won him his greatest success (after years of dabbling in classical music and jazz), Jackson picks up where his 1982 album, "Night & Day," left off, with "Night & Day II." Gone is the lyrical glitz of tracks like "Stepping Out"—the new work focusses on the grittier side of New York City. Jackson is going acoustic for this show, and the set list includes readings from his memoir, "A Cure for Gravity." (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 346-8510. March 15 at 8.)

"HIGHLIGHTS IN JAZZ"
Big bands are rare enough these days, but **Sherrie Maricle** ups the ante by stocking her fifteen-piece Diva Big Band exclusively with female musicians. This swinging aggregation, now in its eighth year, will be joined by the legendary arranger **Bill Holman,** the bop trombonist **Slide Hampton,** and the saxophonist **Tommy Newsom.** (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. March 15 at 8.)

TARAF DE HAÏDOUKS
The fantastically exuberant Gypsy combo, whose name can be interpreted as either "Band of Brigands" or, more sweetly, the "Generous Outlaws Orchestra," makes a rare New York City appearance. Hailing from Clejani, Romania, a traditional center for Gypsy music for hundreds of years, this band, whose dozen members span three generations, creates an organic, unossified brand of traditional music. Accordions, violins, cimbaloms, and flutes are played with virtuosic joy, and the arrangements are wonderfully varied, from solo voice and drum works to dense pieces with layers of strings, while the lyrics touch on everything from love to politics. (Haft Auditorium, Fashion Institute of Technology, 227 W. 27th St. 545-7536. March 16 at 8.)



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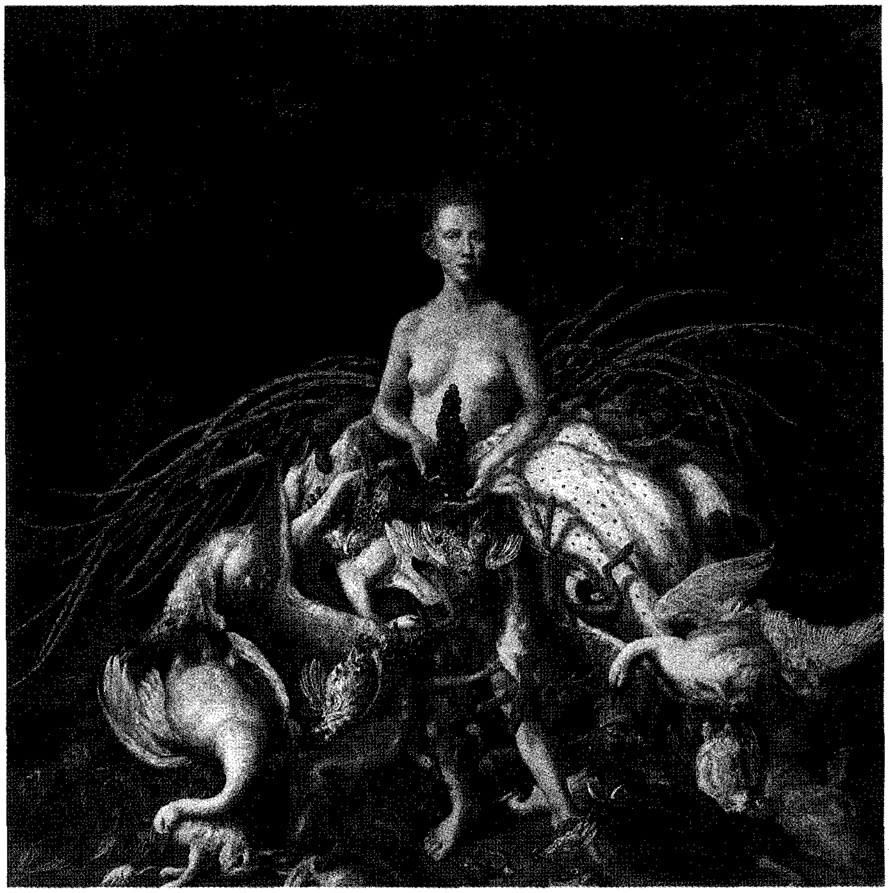
THE CORRS
Having made it big overseas, this preternaturally beautiful trio of Irish sisters, along with their perennially ignored brother, bring their quasi-folk/pop stateside. Unfortunately, the band is disturbingly conventional, and their music is without much flavor. Still, they'll certainly look nice onstage. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. March 16 at 8.)

MARY BLACK
The legendary Irish singer and songwriter. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. March 17 at 8.)

THE CHIEFTAINS
A traditional St. Patrick's Day concert. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. March 17 at 8.)


"Self Portrait as Quarry," by Julie Heffernan, at P.P.O.W (see Art).

JILL SCOTT
At the recent Grammy Awards, the up-and-coming soul vocalist had to share the spotlight with the studio wizard Moby and the antic members of Blue Man Group. In the process, she revealed just how superfluous Moby is, and just how annoying the Blue Men can be. She'll really shine here, with this glorious stage all to herself. (Radio City Music Hall. March 17 at 8.)

RONI SIZE AND REPRAZENT
The seminal Bristol jungle producer and disk jockey brings to town his pulse-raising ensemble. This type of rapid-beat music is usually associated with machines, not people, but Size transcends the constraints of the genre by generating high-speed, multilayered thrills onstage with a full band. Perhaps the human beat box Rahzel, the rapper Method Man, or the former Rage Against the Machine vocalist Zack De La Rocha, all of whom contributed to Size's latest album, "In the Møde," will join the party. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. March 17 at 8.)

KARAN CASEY AND SHARON SHANNON
A double bill of young but highly seasoned Emerald Isle musicians. Casey is the former voice of the band Solas, and Shannon, a veteran of the Waterboys, is a master of the button accordion and the fiddle. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. March 18 at 7.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BOTTOM LINE
15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—March 16-17: The big, unabashed voice, and even bigger emotions, of **Betty Buckley.** March 20-22: **Shawn Colvin,** one of the few members of the new folk movement who don't make you want to tear the transistors out of your radio when their songs come on, will be showcasing songs from "Whole New You," the follow-up to her breakout album of 1996, "A Few Small Repairs." Many of that record's gripping songs were born of divorce and disappointment. Now Colvin is remarried and a new mother. See whether angst or contentment make for better art.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—March 15: **Lloyd Cole** departed the ranks of his acclaimed combo, the Commotions, at the end of the eighties, and took his sonorous voice to more introspective, though no less accomplished, pastures. Now he's back with another new band, the Negatives, and a new album produced by the acclaimed Stephen Street (of the Smiths and Blur fame). March 17: **Jools Holland,** a founding member of the prototypical British New Wave band Squeeze, has demonstrated an interest in boogie-woogie piano, rockabilly, big-band swing, and hosting a British music-television program. Jools (né Julian) is a frantically engaging and virtuosic pianist, as well as a master showman with a smart-aleck personality and an eclectic sensibility. March 20: **Los Super Seven,** the supergroup led by David Hidalgo and Cesar Rosas of Los Lobos and Raul Malo of the Mavericks, followed up its wonderful 1998 self-titled release with a new record, "Canto." With the help of such new

TABLES FOR TWO

MEXICANA MAMA
525 Hudson St. (924-4119)—At first glance, this ridiculously cramped cantina in the West Village doesn't promise much. The menu is an unsurprising list of tacos, enchiladas, etc. The décor—periwinkle walls adorned by a huge poster of a Latin babe, a trio of life-size Chihuahua-shaped candles, a sad-looking Virgin Mary clock, holstered squirt guns—is not exactly three-star calibre. But it quickly becomes apparent that Mexicana Mama is something special. There's no bar in sight, but a perfect margarita appears on command the minute you sit down. The chatty-blasé waiters use such terms as "on a mirror" to mean "in a sauce"—pretentious and incomprehensible, but also attention-grabbing in a place like this. And bobbing around in the open kitchen's crowd is a tall, white toque, which sits atop the tiny chef Julieta Ballesteros, who should be taken as seriously as her hat implies. "You have beautiful rice," a handsome customer recently told her, and the rice is in fact not only lovely to behold but also to taste (it's cooked just right, in two entrée-enhancing versions: tossed with cumin, carrots, and peas, or topped with corn and flavored with cilantro and poblanos).

Ballesteros pays equal attention to all her homey yet elegant dishes. The Mexicana salad (greens with avocado, jicama, mango, and a spicy chipotle dressing) is just as good a reason to eat here as the main courses, and so is the rustic black-bean soup, the whole-bean kind, with big chunks of onion and tomato and a handful of fresh cilantro. Pork tacos are made with fine corn tortillas, filled with smoky-sweet chile-roasted meat and lightly grilled. The relleno, a split poblano that's roasted, not fried, is filled with corn shaved fresh from the cob, plenty of tomato, and just enough savory Chihuahua cheese. But the most interesting entrées are the chalkboard specials, which always include a meat dish (for instance, a thick, slow-cooked pork chop that falls from the bone), a dry-looking but juicy chicken course, and a seafood dish, served on a "mirror" of one of the chef's delicious mole, chile-pepper, or fresh-fruit-and-avocado sauces (a recent favorite: fat triangles of rare tuna on thinly sliced mango and avocado, drizzled with a *guajillo*-chile salsa and topped with almond-and-pistachio paste). For dessert, expect inventive specials along with the usual suspects (flan, seasonal fruit), and while you're eating expect to be accidentally bonked on the head at least once by a backpack attached to someone waiting for a table. It's crowded in here. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays for lunch and dinner. Entrées $8-$15.)

—Emily Nunn

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members as the Brazilian superstar Caetano Veloso and the incomparable Peruvian singer Susana Baca (neither of whom will be performing here), the band has moved beyond Tex-Mex to absorb much more of the Latin-American experience.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—March 15-17: If you thought such instruments as the tuba, saxophone, trumpet, and trombone were only good for serious, contemplative improvisational jazz, then you'll be knocked off your chair by the powerful funk of the **ReBirth Brass Band.** This New Orleans outfit comes to party, which is not to say its jazz roots aren't firmly established, and its nearly all-horn approach will make you wonder what a guitar and bass are for.

VILLAGE UNDERGROUND
130 W. 3rd St. (777-7745)—March 16: **Richard Lloyd,** a criminally under-sung guitar gunslinger, was a pioneer of the New York City punk scene during his days as the foil to Tom Verlaine's more ethereal fret work in the band Television. Between brief Television reunions and a spell as a drug abuser, Lloyd has released some eccentric solo material, the latest of which is "The Cover Doesn't Matter." Be prepared for big cheers from the purists if he even briefly dips into anything off Television's celebrated album "Marquee Moon."

WEBSTER HALL
125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—March 17 and March 19: **Shane MacGowan and the Popes.** The ex-Pogue and celebrated walking corpse MacGowan returns to New York. Although he is an acclaimed lyricist and was, once upon a time, an energetic front man, MacGowan has a penchant for a life style à la Keith Richards which cost him his post in the Pogues and occasionally robs him of the ability to perform coherently. Don't count him out yet, though. He's lasted this long and is planning to tape these shows for a live album.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Through March 24: For those who find Cassandra Wilson too moodily exotic, Diana Krall a bit distant and chilly, and such excellent veteran vocalists as Abbey Lincoln and Shirley Horn, well, too experienced, there's the fresh-faced **Jane Monheit.** The Long Island native has a sweet, sure voice and a taste for tried-and-true standards, and her oceans of hair are hard to take your eyes off of, but why all the excitement? Youth, comeliness, and the ability to produce inoffensive sounds must be as valuable in the jazz marketplace as they are in the world of pop. Dining.

ARCI'S PLACE
450 Park Ave. S., between 30th and 31st Sts. (532-4370)—As old school as they come, the respected mainstream vocalist **Buddy Greco** (here through March 24) has the kind of beneficial musical background (as a young man he played piano for Benny Goodman) which ultimately seeps into a musician's genes.

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—March 14-17: The **Clark Terry** quintet. Terry is a very funny guy and one of the most sophisticated flugelhorn players and trumpeters around. He came up through the big bands, notably Basie's and Ellington's (where he enjoyed a brilliant stint), and he has a personal style that blurs the lines between swing and its younger brother bop. Terry's also a delightful motormouth, spraying torrents of sound with his instrument, or, if that doesn't do the trick, letting loose a verbal wash of gibberish, jokes, and exultations. Dining.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through March 18: **Celia Cruz.** With Tito Puente gone, the indomitable vocalist Cruz is our living embodiment of Latin music, New York-style. Cruz can hit a stage like a contained hurricane, filling the room with a life force that thumbs its nose at her seventy-six years. Sharing the bill is **Johnny Pacheco** and his orchestra. Pacheco was a Latin-music legend years before he kicked off the salsa movement by forming the Fania Records label back in 1964. When this still-vital bandleader gets things moving, the crowd will wish its feet were planted on the hard wood of a sturdy dance floor.

CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, through March 17, **Mary Cleere Haran.** ♦ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **Peter Mintun** is in attendance.

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Another year passes, and a commercial resurgence for **Arthur Blythe** (here with his quartet through March 18) still eludes him. Thankfully, the great alto saxophonist presses on, whether the record companies are behind him or not. His tart tone and shapely phrases

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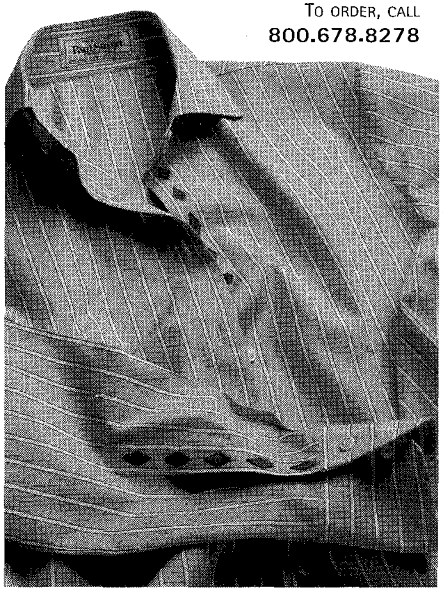

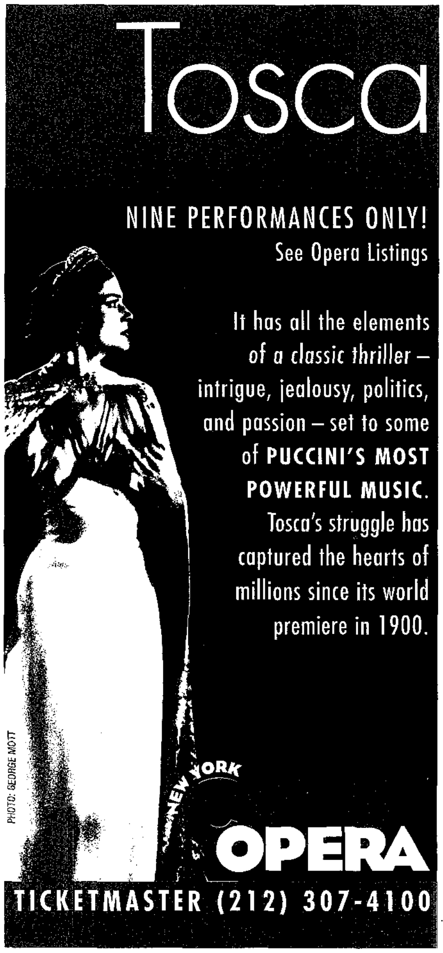

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PHOTO: GEORGE MOTT

NEW YORK OPERA

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are as bracing as they were when this committed modernist came barrelling in from the West Coast some thirty years ago. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through March 25: The **Tommy Flanagan** trio. The world's most elegant jazz pianist settles in with his trio, featuring the bassist **Peter Washington** and the brilliant drummer **Albert Heath.** The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—**"Correggio and Parmigianino: Master Draftsmen of the Renaissance."** Vasari might have raised an eyebrow at this double bill's subtitle. Correggio's works on paper, the Renaissance historian tartly noted, wouldn't even have won him a reputation. A more generous view might be that Correggio's drawings have the charm of true preliminary studies. Their lithe exploratory line and frequent revisions give his levitating nudes and saints a delightful sense of motion. The younger Parmigianino, who may have been Correggio's pupil, owed his life to his drawing skills: during the sack of Rome, he ingratiated himself with marauding German soldiers by giving away "an infinity of drawings." Despite (or maybe because of) this largesse, more than a thousand Parmigianino drawings survive. The hundred on view here include a handful of marvellous images, among them a tremendously muscular rearing horse, all rump and mane and nostrils. It's a pity the curators didn't include paintings, however, since both artists' real achievements were on canvas and plaster. Through May 6. ♦ **"Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Chinese Painting."** Through Aug. 19. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—All work and no play has never looked better than in **"Workspheres,"** a show devoted to contemporary workplace design. Ergonomically correct staplers, mouse pads, and Post-its rest in vitrines alongside ambitious projects commissioned specifically for the exhibition. Through April 22. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—Over the past decade, the Guggenheim's director, Thomas Krens, has turned a mild-mannered museum into an expansionist conglomerate, with branches and partner institutions in Berlin, Bilbao, Venice, and St. Petersburg. Some of the results of this transformation are on view in **"The Global Guggenheim,"** a selection of two hundred paintings and sculptures from the far-flung collection. The works themselves—a mix of familiar masterpieces and overseas guests—are generally spectacular, with particularly rich troves of Kandinsky, Brancusi, Mondrian, Picasso, and Rauschenberg. The installation is less inspiring. Like the curators of MOMA's recent "Modern Starts" experiment, Krens's team aimed to liven things up, but their glib hit-or-miss juxtapositions have a deadening effect. Do we need to be reminded that Rothko and Van Doesburg both liked orange rectangles? It's telling that the most minimally reshuffled area—the Tannhauser gallery—comes out looking the best. Through April 22. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—The photographer Kenneth Josephson has turned exposure tricks and photographic illusions (boy holding photo of boy, nude holding mirror that reflects photographer) into a testament to the resources of the form. The full-scale retrospective makes a forceful case for the inventiveness of the artist, who comes across as a shutterbug version of Donald Barthelme. Through May 27. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, Fridays, 1 to 9.)

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BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART
Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—With two works apiece by ninety-four photographers, **"Committed to the Image"** is a free-for-all, highlighting the diversity of work by contemporary black photographers. As you'd expect, there are plenty of images of jazz greats, civil-rights leaders, Harlem streets, and African villages. Along with such venerable black-and-white images as Gordon Parks's "American Gothic," the show includes some high-octane color work, most notably C. W. Griffin's "Mealtime," a spectacularly eerie, giddy image of a girl sprinting through an orange-and-cerulean arcade. As a community-outreach gesture, the show is hard to fault; aesthetically, though, it leaves one hungry for something more focussed and selective. Through April 29. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

FASHION INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Seventh Ave. at 27th St. (217-5800)—Belgium, so famous of late for the beer and fries whose regular consumption would make these clothes unwearable, has also been turning out young designers of a distinct national school for more than twenty years—designers whose work some call unwearable no matter what you've been eating. Actually, their deconstructed clothing looks more frightening in the alarmist press coverage of their shows than it does in this selection, where for every saddle-backed A. F. Vandevorst ensemble and futuristic van Bierendonck tutu there's a flattering camisole-topped Branquinho dress or a clingy Van Noten readymade heirloom. Martin Margiela interrupts his almost preppie neutral sweater-dressing with a vest wired together from broken dishes, but the shards are all blue and white, and it matches just fine. Through April 14. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, noon to 8; Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

GALLERIES-UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

CHRISTIAN BOLTANSKI
Conjuring the mysteries of memory and loss, this French artist embeds found photographs of anonymous children into his sculptures. The mood of his latest installation is by turns elegiac and festive, like a shrine. The walls of the dimly lit gallery are dotted with red, green, or blue light bulbs, arranged in geometric configurations that also incorporate blurry, nearly anonymous black-and-white photographs. The effect is lonesome but cheery, like a motel sign spied along an abandoned stretch of road. Through March 17. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 977-7160. See Photography—Short List for a related show.)

JAMES VALERIO
A couple of years ago, this super-realist painter decided to devote his time exclusively to drawing. The results, thirteen silvery graphite images, combine banal subject matter with breathtaking technique. As in his paintings, Valerio works from photographs, which he subtly theatricalizes. In the still-lifes, drops of water glitter with a weird, chromelike shine; in the portraits, wens and wrinkles appear to have been pinched into extra relief. Up close, this kind of topographical fetishism can be mesmerizing. As one steps back, though, Valerio's subjects—flowers, meadows, middle-aged men—remain disappointingly mute. Through March 31. (George Adams, 41 W. 57th St. 644-5665.)

"THE BIG ID"
The haunting lilt of Kristin Oppenheim's chanting sound piece sets a melancholy tone for this eclectic show, as the phrase "I am lonely on occasion" fills the space like strange perfume. Hiroshi Sugito's delicately creepy diptych, "Flowers and Elephant Man," looks as if it were dreamt into existence

rather than painted; across the room, a dense black-white-and-flesh-pink canvas by Trenton Doyle Hancock evokes urge incarnate. But the scene stealer is Erick Swenson's disarmingly lifelike sculpture of a fantasy horse, "Edgar," marooned on an ice floe, a defenseless fugitive from the unconscious. Through March 24. (James Cohan, 41 W. 57th St. 755-7171.)

Short List

JULIE HEFFERNAN
Littlejohn, 41 E. 57th St. 980-2323. Through March 31. See also Galleries—Downtown.
OSKAR KOKOSCHKA
Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900. Through March 17.

GALLERIES–CHELSEA

FIONA BANNER
Like an outtake from the Meese Commission report, Banner's latest "wordscape" is a meticulous verbal description of a film called "Asswoman in Wonderland." Printed in appropriately shrill fluorescent colors from a handwritten text, Banner's three large panels are illegible almost to the point of discretion, though the general tenor of the film (and the nature of Banner's Warholian gesture) is clear. Through March 24. (Murray Guy, 453 W. 17th St. 463-7372.)

SANDRA SCOLNICK
Like a Scarsdale descendant of the Freake Limner (the earliest American portraitist), Scolnick paints eerily becalmed domestic portraits. In most of them, doll-like brunettes who resemble the artist stand in immaculate upscale living rooms. They could be ghosts of hypnotized fifties housewives, suggesting a certain nostalgia for prefeminist anomie. The show's most ambitious work offers a giant cutaway view of a three-story house, with little Gothic vignettes being acted out in each of its nine rooms. The highlight, however, is a tiny panel, at once ominous and perversely comforting, of a nightgown-clad woman taking refuge in a closet. Through March 24. (CRG, 535 W. 22nd St. 646-230-9620.)

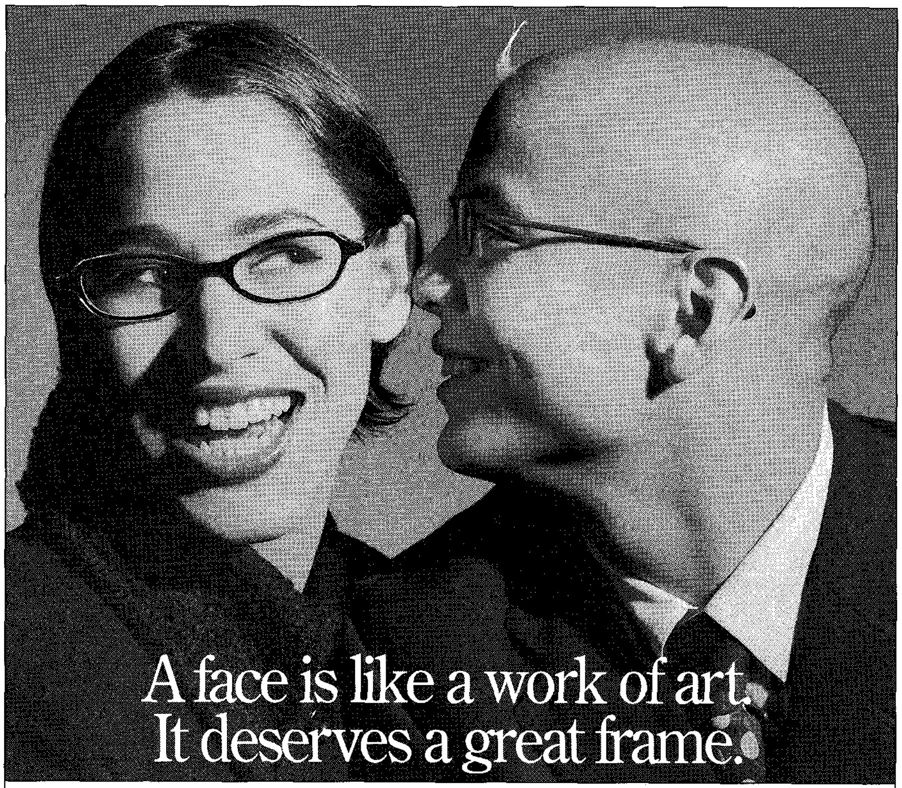
ROSEMARIE TROCKEL
This German artist is notoriously difficult to pigeonhole. She is still best known for her early, machine-knit "paintings" of symbols like the Playboy bunny and the swastika, but her œuvre encompasses everything from photography to sculpture to a pigsty (Trockel's collaborative contribution to the last "Documenta," the quinquennial avant-garde art exhibit in Kassel, Germany). This time, her arrangement of dozens of drawings, which blend the gestural spontaneity of Luc Tuymans with the fey, fashion-minded spirit of Karen Kilimnik, is punctuated by video projections and a winsome pair of mixed-media constructions. Through March 31. (Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 206-9300.)

Short List

SOPHIE CALLE
Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 255-1105. Through March 24.
JEFF GAUNTT
Sikkema, 530 W. 22nd St. 929-2262. Through March 17.

GALLERIES–DOWNTOWN

JULIE HEFFERNAN
Heffernan's paintings offer a wonderful excess of color and content in surreal portraits and landscapes packed with sly art-history references. "Self Portrait as Two-Headed Queen" features two comfortably separate bodies wearing just one enormous, ruffled dress, with mice spilling from it. "Self Portrait with Flower Skirt" alludes, in its belt of miniature wildlife, to the charmed nature scenes nearby, where lobsters sun themselves by mountain waterfalls. Heffernan gives the greedy viewer echoes of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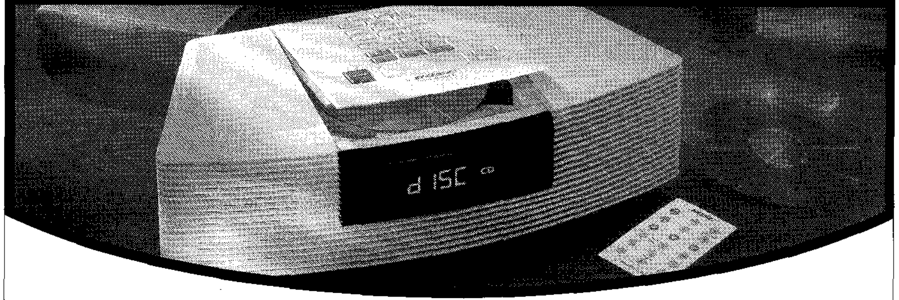

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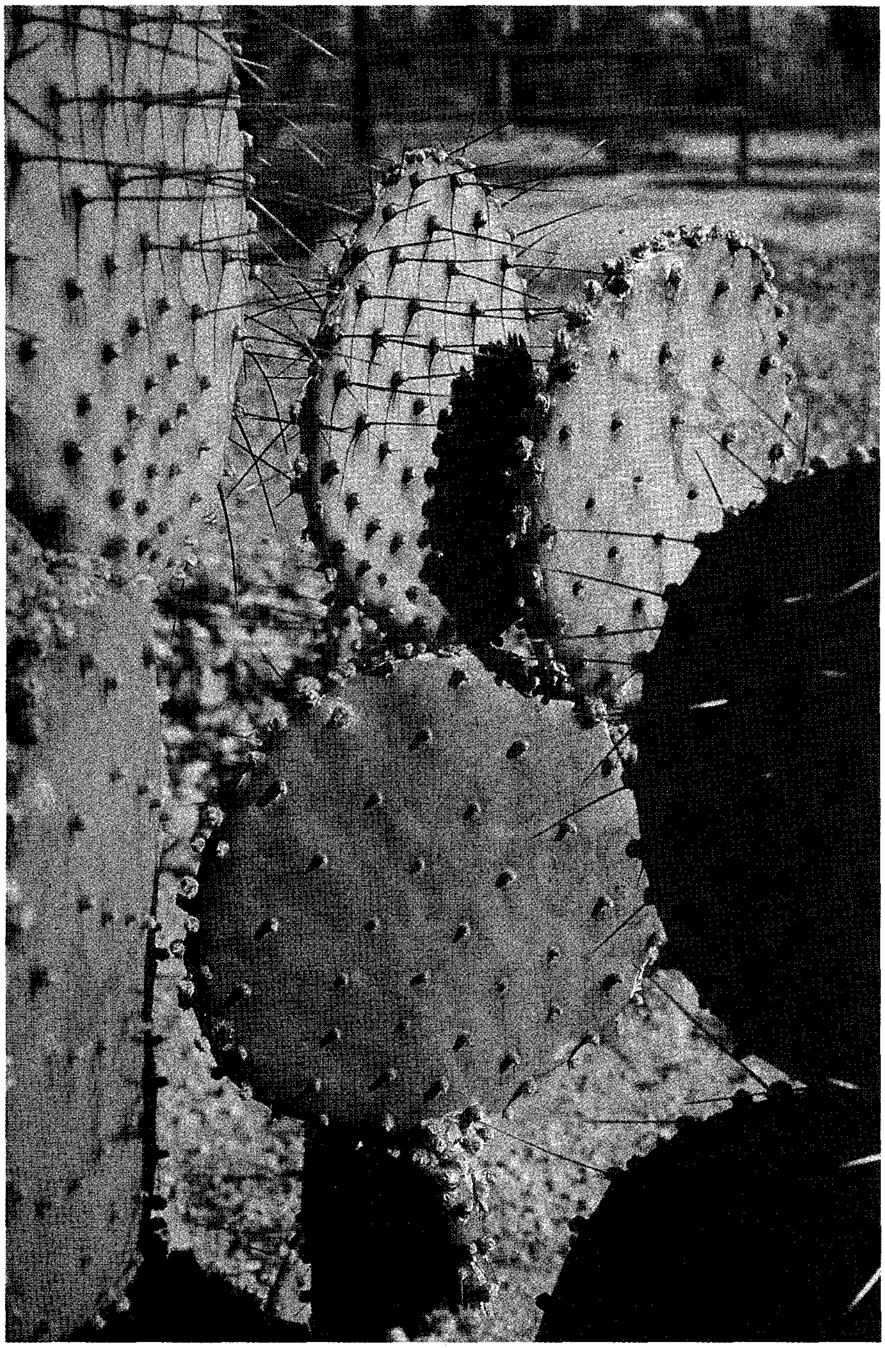

One of William Eggleston's recent Southwestern works at Cheim & Read.

French and Italian masters and the flash of contemporary interpretation at once but refuses to satisfy the desire her mimicry arouses for perfect detail and finish. Through March 31. (P.P.O.W, 476 Broome St. 941-8642. See Uptown—Short List for a related show.)

HARRIET KORMAN

Intersecting freehand shapes, filled in with tweaked primary color. It's hard to think of a simpler recipe for abstract painting and hard to decide whether the strategy is timid or perverse. Should we admire Korman's willingness to stick to modernist precedents, her refusal to search out a signature style? Or is this work simply an unadventurous throwback, a vintner's blend of Klee, Miró, and Sol LeWitt? What's not in doubt is Korman's eye for snug, wobbly geometry and radiant, singalong color. Through March 17. (Lennon Weinberg, 560 Broadway. 941-0012.)

PAUL MC CARTHY

Curators at the New Museum, which is also hosting a McCarthy show, describe "The Garden" as "defiling both the landscape and the sacred bond between generations." It does its best, working with scenery based on sets from "Bonanza" and mechanized figures of a father and son, pants around their knees, humping a tree and the ground, respectively. The soundtrack for this sex machine is a whining, banging motor; after ten years of touring, it sounds tired. The addenda include sketched plans for the piece and a video of a McCarthy performance; included in the awed, built-in audience are large photographs, one of a Bambiesque deer and another taken from a 1984 douche ad, both pictured outdoors and framed in raw wood. Through April 7. (Deitch, 76 Grand St. 343-7300.)

Short List

NICHOLAS HERRERA

Cavin-Morris, 560 Broadway. 226-3768.
Through March 24.

JESSY PARK

Bodell, 13 E. 7th St. 477-1820.
Through March 18.

AUCTIONS & ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S

March 14 at 10:15 A.M.: American paintings, drawings, and sculpture, including work by George Caleb Bingham, Ben Shahn, Grandma Moses, the Peale family, and a host of American Impressionists. ♦ March 20 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: The house kicks off its Asian Week offerings with a broad range of paintings, manuscripts, and sculpture from India, Persia, the Himalayas, and Southeast Asia. Highlights of the sale include a gilt copper-alloy Buddha from thirteenth-century Tibet, a Khmer sandstone figure of the goddess Uma from the eleventh century, and "Concise Account of the People" (ca. 1825), a collection of a hundred and twenty-two colored works on paper depicting the various castes of Hindustan. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S

March 20 at 10 A.M. and 2: The first of a series of Asian Week sales, this one featuring Chinese ceramics and works of art. Among the notable items are forty-eight examples of *ming qi* vases, jars, and figures, in vibrant three-color glazes, designed to accompany the dead to the afterlife, which the house hopes to offer as a single lot. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000.)

CHRISTIE'S EAST

March 19 at 10 A.M. and 2: The smaller house offers its own selection of Asian decorative arts. (219 E. 67th St. 606-0400.)

DOYLE

March 19 at 1: Chinese, Japanese, and Korean ceramics and art works from the fifth century B.C. to the nineteenth century, including an unusually large gilt bronze figure of the Bodhisattva of Compassion, from the Tang dynasty (618-907). (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730.)

SWANN

March 15 at 10:30 A.M.: Works of ancient-Greek, Latin, and Continental literature, translated into English between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries; among the selections are first editions of Plato's "Apology" and Machiavelli's collected works. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

WILLIAM EGGLESTON

Eggleston has moved from the snapshot style he was so well known for in the seventies into close-range work focussed on more overt symbols: flags, cars, signs, and religious statues from the Southwest. His mastery of color keeps these images of images from losing all subjectivity and sense of place, but the sign for Route 66 is overkill; it's clear where these were taken. Through April 14. (Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727.)

MATTHIAS PETRUS SCHALLER

This show, a sort of companion to the Museum of Modern Art's Andreas Gursky exhibit, offers eight large color photographs of Gursky's sprawling studio in Dusseldorf. It's not so much a backstage tour of his artistic process—the cavernous, sunlit space is plain, the work shown is framed, and some of it is even (tantalizingly) wrapped—as it is a tour of his mind, which, Schaller argues implicitly, is where the art is really made. Through March 22. (Goethe Institute, 1014 Fifth Ave., at 83rd St. 439-8700.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Carrie Mae Weems's **"The Hampton Project"** (Uptown) is really two shows, a roomful of Frances Benjamin Johnston's sober photographs of students at the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (a groundbreaking school for black and Native American students, which Johnston documented for the 1900 Universal Exposition in Paris) and Weems's take on those images, cropped and enlarged, printed on cloth, and accompanied by a repetitive voice-over. Weems is at once appreciative of and hostile to Johnston, whose pictures

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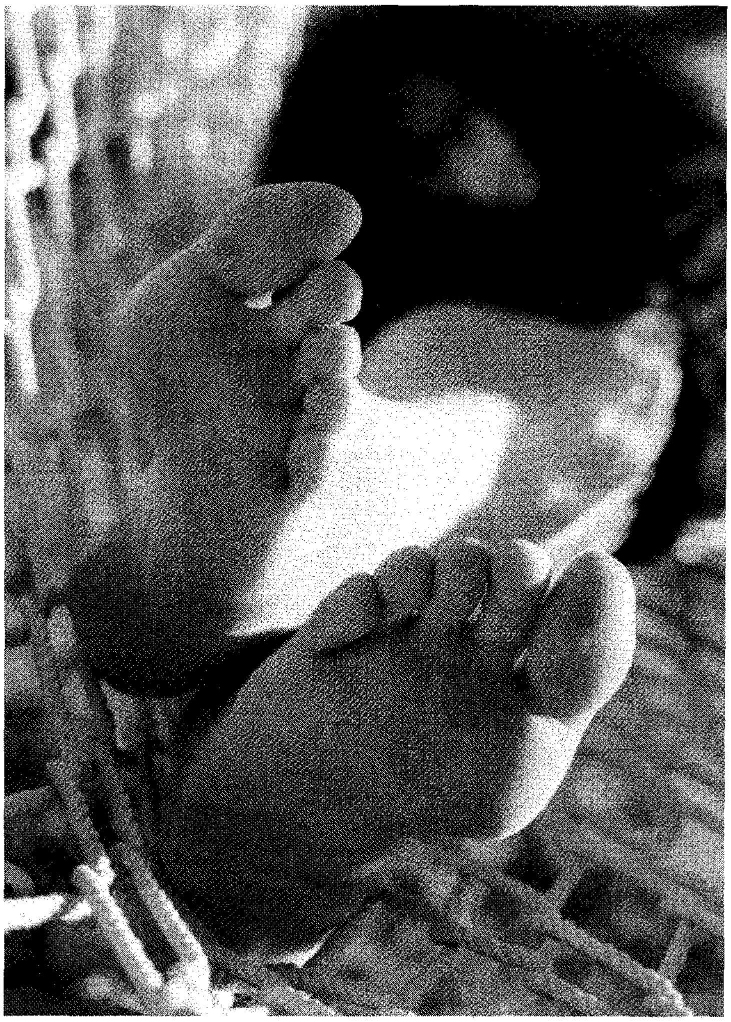

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she salutes as she defaces them and whose stagy politicized spirit she upholds as much as violates. The effect is bound to make viewers wish for the peace of an old-fashioned exhibit, but it works—like an advertisement you try to tune out, Weems's message gets absorbed anyway. Through April 1. ♦ **"Andy Warhol: Photography"** and **"Perfecting Mankind: Eugenics and Photography"** continue (Midtown) through March 18. (Uptown: 1130 Fifth Ave., at 93rd St. Midtown: 1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10-5; Fridays, 10-8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6.)

Short List

RICHARD BARNES
Urbach, 526 W. 26th St. 627-0974.
Through April 7.

CHRISTIAN BOLTANSKI / JEFF WALL
Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 977-7160. Through April 14. See also Galleries—Uptown.

WARD DAVENNY
Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. 397-0669.
Through March 31.

KENNETH JOSEPHSON
Richardson, 535 W. 22nd St. 646-230-9610.
Through March 31.

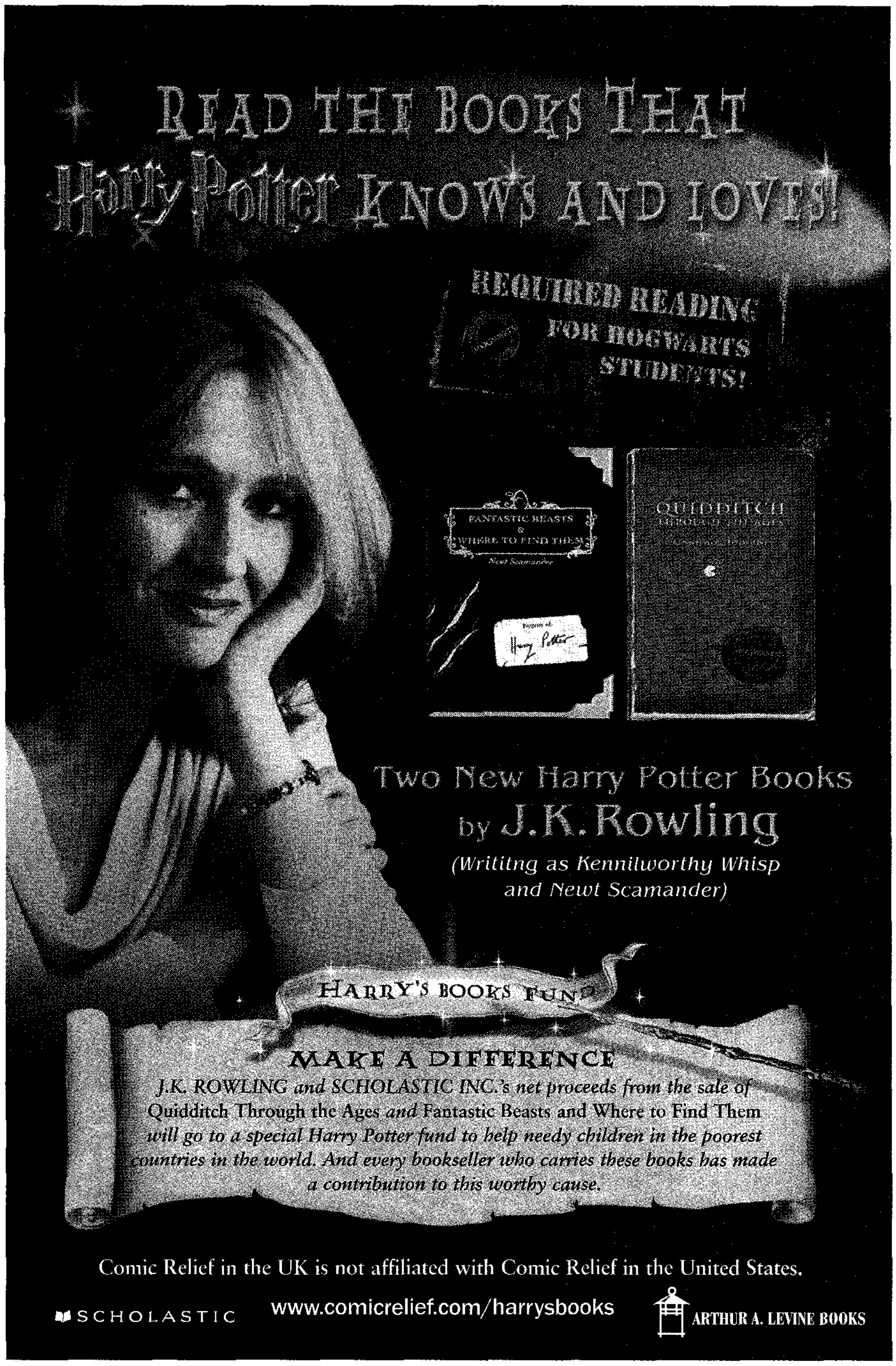
RAY K. METZKER
Miller, 20 W. 57th St. 397-3930.
Through March 31.

RIKA NOGUCHI
D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 352-9460.
Through March 24.

HIROSHI SUGIMOTO
Sonnabend, 536 W. 22nd St. 627-1018.
Through March 24.

"NIGHT LIFE"
Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766.
Through April 15.

See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Whitney Museum and the Brooklyn Museum of Art.



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METROPOLITAN OPERA
"Die Zauberflöte," with Hei-Kyung Hong, Elizabeth Carter, Michael Schade, Simon Keenlyside, John Cheek, and Kurt Moll; Sebastian Weigle conducts. (March 14 at 8.) ♦ The final performance of the season, with Mary Dunleavy replacing Carter. (March 17 at 8.) ♦ The final performance of **"Così Fan Tutte,"** with Melanie Diener, Susan Graham, Clare Gormley, Gregory Turay, Christopher Schaldenbrand, and Julien Robbins; Patrick Summers. (March 15 at 7:30.) ♦ A new production of **"Nabucco,"** Verdi's third opera, directed by Elijah Moshinsky. The hefty choral writing of this Biblical epic (including the famous "Va, pensiero," which quickly became an Italian nationalist hymn) would bend it toward the world of oratorio if it weren't for the vocal fireworks of the leading roles. With Maria Guleghina (as Abigaille, one of the most punishing soprano roles in the Italian repertory), Wendy White, Francisco Casanova, Juan Pons, and Samuel Ramey; James Levine. (March 16 at 8 and March 20 at 7:30.) ♦ **"La Bohème,"** with Miriam Gauci, Ainhoa Arteta, Frank Lopardo, Gerald Finley, Earle Patriarco, and Richard Bernstein; Steven Crawford. (March 17 at 1:30.) ♦ **"The Gambler,"** the Met's first-ever presentation of a Prokofiev opera, in a new production by Temur Chkheidze, with sets by George Tsypin. The scenario is based on Dostoyevsky's story about a group of desperate Russians who lose their hearts and wallets at a German spa; though the work was once dismissed as a curiosity, recent productions have shown it to be a compelling ensemble piece in a bracing modernist style. With Olga Guryakova and Olga Savova (both making their débuts), Elena Obraztsova, Vladimir Galouzine, Nikolai Gassiev, John Fanning, and Sergei Alexashkin (another début); Valery Gergiev. (March 19 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA
A new production of **"La Bohème,"** directed by James Robinson and with sets by Allen Moyer. With Maria Kanyova, Nicole Heaston, Rolando Villazon, Alfredo Daza, George Cordes, and Mel Ulrich; George Manahan conducts. (March 14 at 7:30, March 16 at 8, March 18 at 1:30, and March 20 at 7:30.) ♦ Mark Lamos's production of **"Tosca,"** set in Fascist Italy in the nineteen-thirties, continues its run. With Amy Johnson, Alfredo Portilla, and Jeffrey Kneebone; Richard Buckley. (March 15 at 7:30.) ♦ The première of a new production, also by Lamos, of Handel's **"Acis and Galatea,"** his first dramatic work in English, with a libretto by John Gay (of "The Beggar's Opera" fame). Though popular since its première in 1718, this serenata has never been staged in New York before; its loose construction, small cast, and simple rustic theme make concert performances much too tempting. With Christine Brandes, William Burden, John Tessier, and Dean Elzinga; Jane Glover. (March 17 at 1:30.) ♦ **"Rigoletto,"** a reprise of the new production that appeared last fall, with Christina Bouras, Kirstin Chávez, Mark Delavan (in the title role), Raul Hernandez, and Peter Volpe; Guido Johannes Rumstadt. (March 17 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

AMATO OPERA
The chamber-size company presents Gounod's "Faust"; Richard Leighton's production is set in fifteenth-century Lorraine, with puppetry and décor inspired by woodcuts of the era. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery. 228-8200. March 16-17 at 7:30 and March 18 at 2:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Yo-Yo Ma has been closely examining the links between the music of Asia and the West, and in his latest Philharmonic appearance he premières works by two composers of Iranian descent. Rich-

ard Danielpour's Cello Concerto No. 2, "Through the Ancient Valley," mixes traditional Persian instruments with those of the standard symphony orchestra, a body for which the composer typically writes with vivid orchestration and high-flown rhetoric. Kayhan Kalhor, a virtuoso on the Persian *kamāncheh*, a type of fiddle, will assist Ma not only in the Danielpour work but also in his own "Blue as the Turquoise Night of Neyshabur," a work on a more intimate scale. Rimsky-Korsakov's "Scheherazade" completes the program; Kurt Masur conducts. (Avery Fisher Hall. 721-6500. March 14-17 at 8.)

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Bernard Haitink brings the orchestra to Carnegie Hall for a program of Stravinsky, Brahms, and Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 4 (with Frank Peter Zimmermann). (247-7800. March 14-15 at 8.)

EOS ORCHESTRA

Jonathan Sheffer joins the Stravinsky celebrations, conducting staged versions of the theatrical miniatures "Renard" and "Histoire du Soldat" (directed by Christopher Alden), along with "Ragtime" and the "Pribaoutki" songs. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. 691-6415. March 15 at 8.)

CONCORDIA ORCHESTRA

Marin Alsop leads members of the orchestra in a program featuring the chamber versions of Strauss's "Till Eulenspiegel" and Mahler's Fourth Symphony (with the soprano Amy Burton). (Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St. 685-0008, ext. 347. March 16 at 6:30.)

"FOCUS ON STRAVINSKY"

Like Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center is making the music of Stravinsky a special theme this season, commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of his death. Esa-Pekka Salonen, who brings a visceral, hard-edged drive to the composer's music, begins the Center's events (which run through May) in two concerts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. March 16 at 8: Salonen leads the orchestra's New Music Group in performances of "The Soldier's Tale" (the trio version of five movements, with the pianist Olli Mustonen), the Octet, the "Dumbarton Oaks" Concerto, and, with the baritone Sanford Sylvan, the piquant little "Pribaoutki" (settings of Russian folk tales) and "Abraham and Isaac," the most fearsome and impenetrable of Stravinsky's later works. (Alice Tully Hall.) ♦ March 18 at 3: Mustonen, a composer-pianist known for his brilliantly eccentric interpretations, returns for the Movements for Piano and Orchestra, as well as the Capriccio and the Concerto for Piano and Winds; Salonen completes the program with the inevitable "Firebird" (in the complete ballet score). (Avery Fisher Hall. 721-6500.)

LES VIOLINS DU ROY

The large, sweet-voiced countertenor of David Daniels has won him a large public; Vivaldi's "Nisi Dominus" will give him lots of florid passagework to show it off, but Bach's tragic cantata "Ich habe genug" demands a more introspective type of vocalism. He performs both works with Bernard Labadie and the conductor's Quebec-based authentic-performance ensemble, which also presents music by Albinoni, Handel, and Purcell. (Alice Tully Hall. 721-6500. March 18 at 2.)

AMERICAN COMPOSERS ORCHESTRA: "ELLIS ISLAND TO JFK"

Dennis Russell Davies leads the orchestra in a concert celebrating the musical contributions of American immigrants; the program includes Lukas Foss's Concerto for Piano Left Hand (with Leon Fleisher), premières from Tania León and Jin Hi Kim, and (surprisingly) Schoenberg's "Variations for Orchestra," which is widely considered to be the most challenging piece in the standard repertory. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. March 18 at 3.)

RECITALS

MAURIZIO POLLINI

Pollini's two-year "Perspectives" series finally comes to a close, with a pair of concerts. The first explores the nature of monody and polyphony through music by Debussy, Berio, and Monteverdi, and through ancient Greek chant; the guest artists include the contralto Bernadette Manca di Nissa and the Vox Vocal Ensemble. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 247-7800. March 14 at 8.) ♦ As a grand finale, the pianist offers a solo recital of music by Brahms, Webern, Stockhausen, and Beethoven (the "Diabelli" Variations). (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. March 19 at 7:30.)

GUARNERI STRING QUARTET

The eminent ensemble offers music by Haydn, Berg (the Quartet, Op. 3), and Beethoven. (Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. March 17 at 8.)

DEEP LISTENING BAND

Even among American mavericks, the composer Pauline Oliveros is a standout: since the nineteen-seventies she has abandoned traditional classical procedures to develop her own brand of meditative "deep listening," influenced by her study of Native American and Asian cultures. She joins with the experimental trombonist Stuart Dempster and the composer and electronic-instument builder David Gamper to create a musical event at Engine 27. (173 Franklin St. 431-7466. March 17 at 8.)

HAFFNER WIND QUINTET

The British ensemble presents music by Mozart, Taffanel, Barber ("Summer Music"), Martin Butler, and Walton (five movements from "Façade"). (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. March 18 at 5.)

EUGENIA ZUKERMAN

The flutist, who launched her career with Young Concert Artists, joins with the harpist Gwenyth Wentink, one of Y.C.A.'s recent prizewinners, for a concert of music by C. P. E. Bach, Vincent Persichetti, and others. (Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St. 685-0008, ext. 347. March 20 at 1.)

LISA MOORE

The pianist performs music by György Ligeti and by her husband, Martin Bresnick (the première of "For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise," with video by Lesley Weinberg and Robert Bresnick). (Miller Theatre, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. March 20 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

READINGS

March 14 at 6:30: By the actors F. Murray Abraham, William Hurt, and Anil Kumar, from short stories about exile and memory by Rabindranath Maharaj, Aleksandar Hemon, and André Aciman, who will also be on hand as the host. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) ♦ March 14 at 7:30: By W. G. Sebald, from his novel "Vertigo." Susan Sontag will provide the introduction. (Barnes & Noble, 33 E. 17th St. No tickets necessary.)

TALKS

March 15 at 6:30: A discussion about change—and the lack thereof—in the sweatshop business, with Amy Hall, the manager of social responsibility at Eileen Fisher; Trinh Duong, of the Chinese Staff and Workers Association; Daniel Soyer, an assistant professor of history at Fordham University; and Assemblyman Felix W. Ortiz, who is also the author of "Behind Closed Doors: A Look Into the Underground Sweatshop Industry." (Graduate Center, City University of New York, Fifth Ave. at 34th St. For more information, call 817-8215.) ♦ March 16 at 3:30: Herbert Foerstel, an expert on censorship and the author of such books as "Surveillance in the Stacks: The F.B.I.'s Library Awareness Program" and "Banned in the U.S.A.," marks Freedom of Information Day, which was created by Congress in 1989 to coincide with the birthday of James Madison, a major proponent of the Bill of Rights. Now you know. (New York Public Library's Science, Industry and Business Library, Madison Ave. at 34th St. For reservations, which are required, call 592-7044.) ♦ March 19 at 7:30: The actors Larry Bryggman, Johanna Day, and Ben Shenkman join the playwright David Auburn in a discussion of the play "Proof." With Leonard Lopate as the moderator. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5500.)

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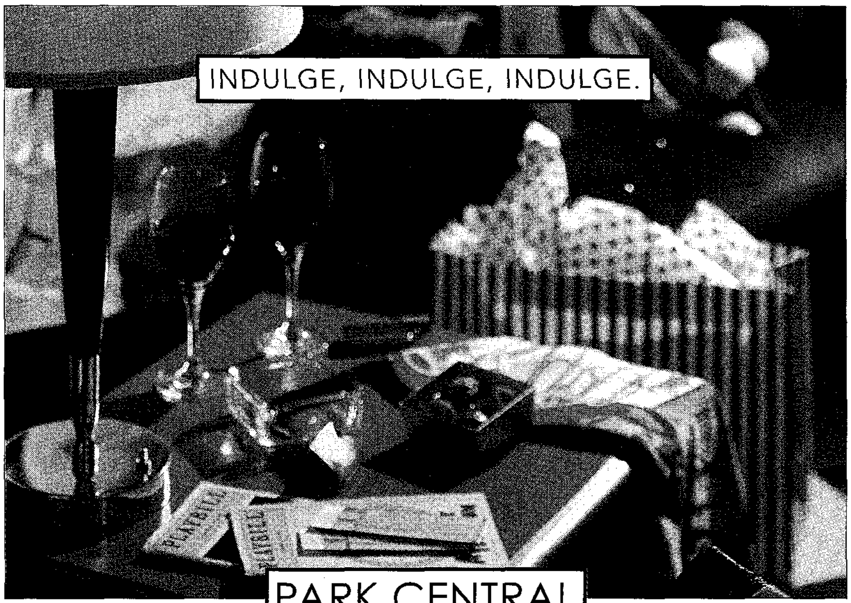

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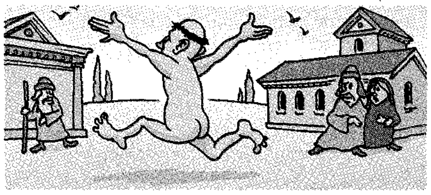
BOOK CURRENTS

When the Saints Go Marching In

Revellers toasting St. Patrick this week might be surprised to learn that Ireland's patron saint was not, in fact, Irish, but a kidnapped English slave. According to Valerie Martin, medieval hagiographers often emphasized popular legend over verifiable history. In **SALVATION** (Knopf), her account of the life of St. Francis of Assisi, Martin blends fiction with early biographies, which not only recount the story of Francis stripping in the streets of Assisi but also note the saint's "fondness for sweets" and "the fact that his eyebrows met over the bridge of his nose."

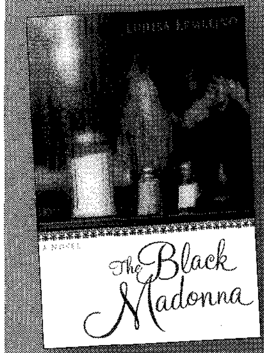


TONY MILLIONAIRE

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF THOMAS BECKET (Oxford), edited by Anne J. Duggan, collects the complete letters of the saint, including those written during his exile in France, in which Becket pleads with King Henry II to return his possessions, "lest the hand of the Most High stretched out over you should send its bolts against you, like arrows to the target." Later, in an even more desperate mood, he alerts the king to the nobleman Randulf de Broc's boast, "that we shall not long rejoice in your peace, because we shall not finish a whole loaf in England before he, as he threatens, takes away our life." In December of 1170, de Broc welcomed four knights to Saltwood Castle, in Canterbury; the following evening, Becket was murdered in his cathedral.

According to Terry Matz's **THE DAYBOOK OF SAINTS** (Viking), this week marks the feast days of St. Seraphina, a teen-age convalescent who spent six patient years lying on an oaken plank, and St. Matilda of Saxony, the mother of St. Bruno. When two of Matilda's less holy sons "accused her of embezzling money to support charities, she said that she was glad the brothers were working together, even if it was to harass her," a saintly sentiment worthy of a mother from any faith.

—*Nell Freudenberger*


LOUISA ERMELINO
A NOVEL
The Black Madonna

MADONNA

Evoking the power of Mom and Madonna rather than the Mafia, this novel offers a refreshing celebration of Italian-American culture via tales of an unforgettable trio of mothers and sons in New York's Little Italy.

THE BLACK MADONNA
by LOUISA ERMELINO
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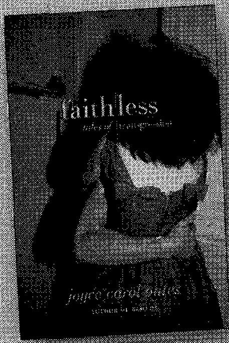
Our Price: $18.40
Readers' Advantage Price: $16.56

MYSTIQUE


faithless
tales of transgression
joyce carol oates

This new collection of short stories from the acclaimed author of *Blonde* explores the mysterious private lives of ordinary individuals—from a woman with an erotic fetish for firearms to another outlining the bizarre contours of obsessive love.

FAITHLESS: TALES OF TRANSGRESSION
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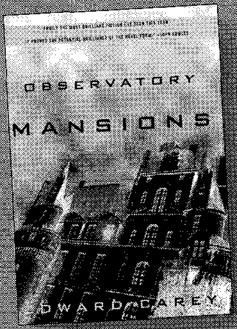
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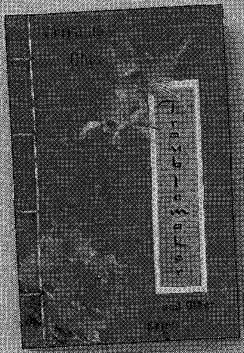
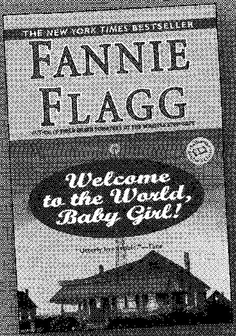


East and West, young and old collide in these intertwined stories exploring issues of family, sex, disillusionment, and love among an eclectic group of Chinese families.

TROUBLEMAKER AND OTHER SAINTS
by CHRISTINA CHIU
Pub. Price: $23.95
Our Price: $19.16
Readers' Advantage Price: $17.24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FANNIE FLAGG
Welcome to the World, Baby Girl!

MISSOURI

New from the author of *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café*, this touching and hilarious book follows a rising network tv star who returns to her childhood home to discover the healing power of life in a small Missouri town.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD, BABY GIRL!
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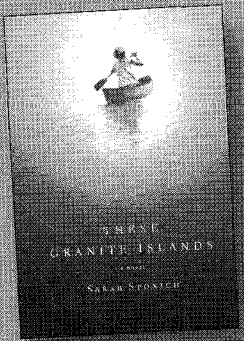
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MOVIES OPENING

AMERICAN DESI
A romantic comedy about an Indian-American student who rediscovers his Eastern heritage. Written and directed by Piyush Dinker Pandya. Opening March 16.

THE DISH
A drama about the group of scientists who operated a remote satellite relay station in Australia during the Apollo moon landing. Directed by Rob Sitch. Opening March 14.

ENEMY AT THE GATES
Jude Law plays Vassilli Zaitsev, a Russian sniper and war hero who helped defend Stalingrad, in this drama directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud. With Ed Harris. Opening March 16.

EXIT WOUNDS
Andrzej Bartkowiak directed this action pic about an inner-city cop (Steven Seagal) who discovers a web of corruption. With DMX, Isaiah Washington, and Tom Arnold. Opening March 16.

MEMENTO
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening March 16.

FILM NOTES

BEFORE NIGHT FALLS
At its best, Julian Schnabel's second film is a memoir of easy and raffish good times—the endless summer days at the beginning of the Cuban Revolution. Schnabel adapted an autobiographical memoir by the poet and novelist Reinaldo Arenas (Javier Bardem), a homosexual who was initially a participant in the revolution, then a victim of it, and was finally allowed to leave Cuba in 1980. Arenas settled in New York, wrote a great deal, and, suffering from AIDS, committed suicide here in 1990. Schnabel doesn't tell this story coherently: characters appear or disappear without explanation, and we don't always know where we are. The method is closer to collage than to Hollywood script construction, but Schnabel works sensually, and that makes up for a lot. Bardem, who has the face of a shy, smiling bull—a prominent nose, handsome eyes—loosens up his shoulders and elbows and gives a performance of great charm.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 1/8/01.) (Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Quad Cinema.)

CHOCOLAT
A confectionary fairy tale, photographed in pale-lemon winter light. In France, in 1960, a beautiful and charming woman (Juliette Binoche) and her little girl (Victoire Thivisol) waft into a small town, open a *chocolaterie*, and provide the unhappy and repressed inhabitants with exactly the kind of bonbons they need to make their troubles go away (the chocolate, laced with an old Mayan powder, acts as an all-purpose elixir). This inspires the hostility of the town's impotent deity, the Comte de Reynaud (Alfred Molina), who rallies the forces of reaction. Lasse Hallström's production is yet another complacent movie about the free spirits versus the squares; this one commends the audience for favoring such dangerous things as eating, dancing, friendship, sex, and riverboats. Judi Dench, as a grouchy old lady, transcends the syrup.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center, Battery Park 16, Cinema 3rd Avenue, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Olympia I and II.)

THE CRIME OF MONSIEUR LANGE
An ode to France's Popular Front and to popular art, this 1935 film has the shape and bittersweet flavor of a modern fable. Lange (René Lefèvre), an aspiring serial writer, slaves for a greedy publisher named Batala (Jules Berry); after Batala is reportedly killed in a train wreck, his employees form a coöperative, and Lange's cowboy creation, Arizona Jim, becomes a smash in a photo-and-text format. The greatness of the director, Jean Renoir, and the screenwriter, Jacques Prévert, is best exemplified by the complexity and charm of their villain. Berry's Batala anticipates Peter Sellers' Quilty in "Lolita" in his rapacious wisdom, seductiveness, and cunning use of disguise. In French.—*Michael Sragow* (BAM Rose Cinemas; March 19.)

"LOVE, LOVE, AMORE AND SPAGHETTI"
LORENZO
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CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON
The new Ang Lee film is scripted in Cantonese and Mandarin and set in the China of the early nineteenth century, although we could be watching a fable from any time in the last millennium, or from no time at all. Yu Shu Lien (Michelle Yeoh), probably the least excitable action heroine in modern movies, is given a sword by Li Mu Bai (Chow Yun Fat), for safekeeping. Needless to say, it is soon stolen, and the hunt is on. When pursuing a likely suspect, Mu Bai and Shu Lien tend to take the quickest route, whether it's up a wall, over a roof, across a lake, or, best of all, from tree to tree. They don't fly so much as dance through the air, taking fairy-tale strides. Athletic honors are shared between Yeoh and Zhang Ziyi, who plays a rebellious young noblewoman with a fiery past. The outright winner is Ang Lee, who is at once dependably stylish and smartly unpredictable.—*Anthony Lane* (12/11/00) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and 64th and 2nd.)

THE GARDEN OF THE FINZI-CONTINIS
Vittorio De Sica's lyric evocation of a vanished group of people (the cultivated, aristocratic Jewish Italian landowners) and a vanished mood. Based on Giorgio Bassani's semiautobiographical novel, this 1970 film records how Giorgio, a middle-class outsider (Lino Capolicchio), is drawn into the decaying, enchanted world of the Finzi-Continis by the imperious, contrary Micòl (Dominique Sanda); she and her languid brother (Helmut Berger) are spoiled, beautiful people without the will to save themselves. This extraordinary film, with its melancholy glamour, is perhaps the only one that records the half-hearted anti-Jewish measures of the Mussolini period—which were, however, sufficient to wipe out the Finzi-Continis and all they represented. In Italian.—*Pauline Kael* (Symphony Space; March 20.)

THE GLEANERS AND I
The French filmmaker Agnès Varda, digital camera in hand, roams around her native country recording the movements of gleaners. Traditionally, as in the archetypal Millet painting, gleaners were women who gathered the remains of the harvest; their modern counterparts are mostly scavengers, searching in dumpsters and other likely places. The French, of course, give the practice a wonderfully perverse twist—many gleaners do so by choice, disdainful of wastefulness and rampant consumerism. Varda's photographic eye is much in evidence, and her narration is both shrewd and whimsical. When she leaves a camera on accidentally, she uses the unintended footage to create a "dance of the lens cap," a filmic gleaning that acts as a perfect grace note. In French.—*Michael Agger* (Film Forum.)

HANNIBAL
Ten years after "The Silence of the Lambs," Hannibal Lecter returns to the table. He is played, once again, by Anthony Hopkins, who seems both more placid and more particular in his cravings. Lecter is in Florence, where he is suspected by a local detective (Giancarlo Giannini, the best and most rumpled thing in the movie). Also on the trail is Clarice Starling (Julianne Moore), who is now an outcast within the F.B.I. Huntress and prey finally meet; indeed, we are given to understand that they can barely keep away from each other. The screenwriters, David Mamet and Steven Zaillian, do a good job of sifting the dross from Thomas Harris's novel, and the director, Ridley Scott, gets elegant value from what remains. The locations are lush, the reworked ending could not be neater, and the special effects were apparently devised by an abattoir. There's just one problem, and it's insurmountable: this is not a scary movie.—*A.L.* (2/12/01) (Astor Plaza, Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema I and II, Orpheum VII, Union Square, and Waverly.)

THE HOUSE OF MIRTH
The evidence suggests that Edith Wharton may be easier and more rewarding to film than Henry James. "The Age of Innocence" returned Martin Scorsese to his old, obsessive form, and now the British director Terence Davies has been inspired to his best work by Wharton's earlier and less elaborate novel—her first major success, which sold a hundred and forty thousand copies in its first couple of months. Whether moviegoers will match that enthusiasm is hard to tell; there is grace and passion on show here, but they are firmly and gradually stifled. By the film's close, the weight of the wrong done to the heroine, Lily Bart, feels unredeemed. Gillian Anderson lends Bart a fine air of pride and craving. As she spurns the offer of a safe marriage from a property tycoon (Anthony LaPaglia), or of fleshly compromise with the porcine Gus Trenor (Dan Aykroyd), we believe both in her principles and in the certainty of her doom.—*A.L.* (12/25/00 & 1/1/01) (Eastside Playhouse and Quad Cinema.)

IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE
The latest film from the talented young Hong Kong writer-director Wong Kar Wai makes us pant for adultery. In the early sixties, in a community of Shanghai refugees living in Hong Kong, Mrs. Chan (Maggie Cheung) and Mr. Chow (Tony Leung) are next-door neighbors in a friendly apartment building. The perfectly dressed and coiffed couple meet, talk, and realize that their frequently travelling spouses are off having an affair with each other. What to do? The movie is all about sensual anticipation. Nat King Cole croons on the soundtrack, and the camera caresses the rain on the streets and the texture of a stone wall in the semi-darkness. So skillfully does the director bring us to a state of breathless expectation that when he refuses to deliver the goods he almost seems to have invented a new form of perversion. In Cantonese and French.—*D.D.* (2/5/01) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 16, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Murray Hill Cinemas.)

KNIFE IN THE WATER
The work of a wunderkind who grew up fast—Roman Polanski made this 1961 film when he was twenty-eight, but it has the low-key wryness and technical assurance you expect from directors twice as old. This sinister, unpredictable fusion of psychological drama and unromantic comedy unfolds mostly during a daylong sailboat journey. When a well-off husband and wife (Leon Niemczyk and Jolanta Umecka) take on a student (Zygmunt Malanowicz) as a deckhand, sexual tension and masculine rivalry add fire to built-in class jealousies. Polanski maintains an ultra-modern cool tone; no one leaves the water unscathed. In Polish.—*M.S.* (Cinema Classics; March 14-15.)

LAST RESORT
A beautifully filmed, moody story about a young Russian mother (Dina Korzun) and son who arrive for a new life in London only to be shunted aside into a holding area in a seaside town. In this limbo, she is befriended by an Englishman (Paddy

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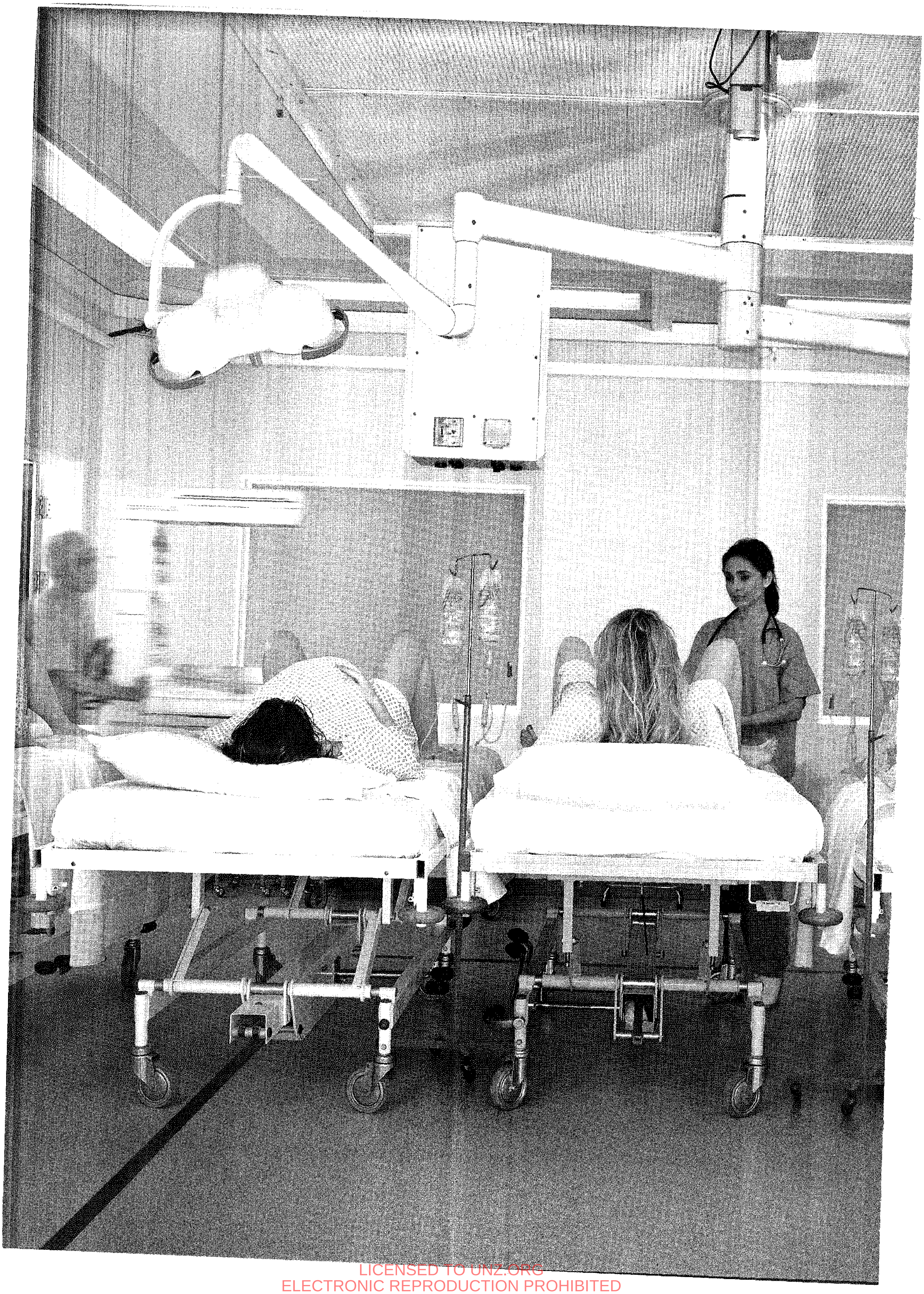

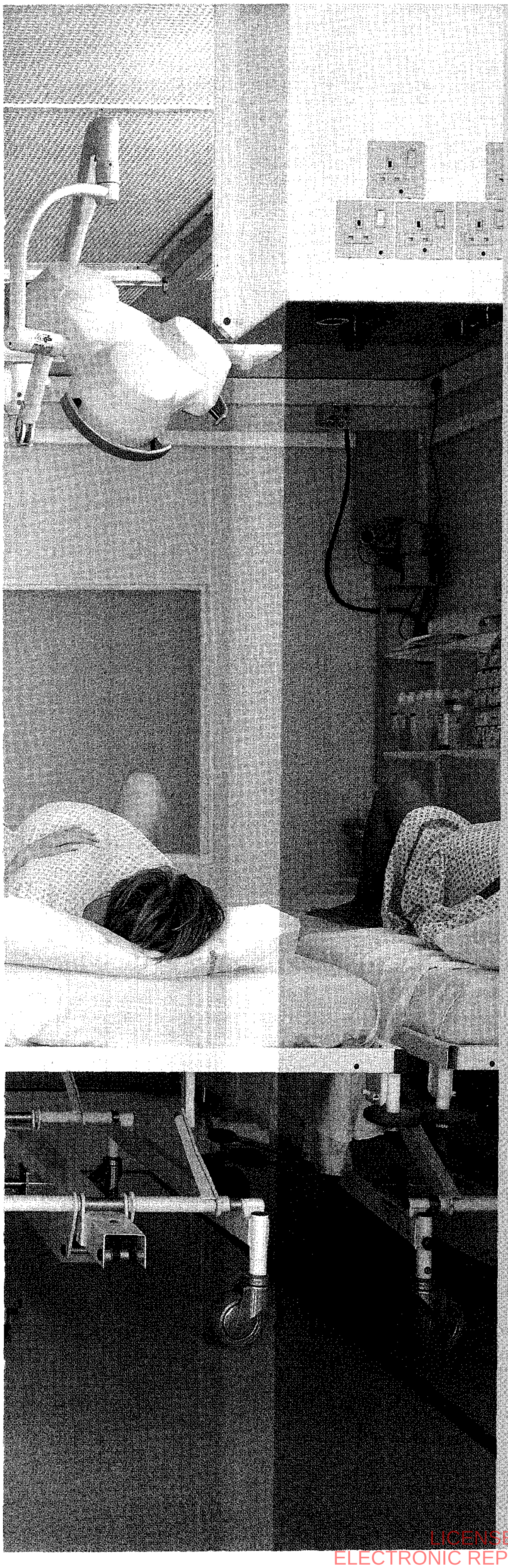

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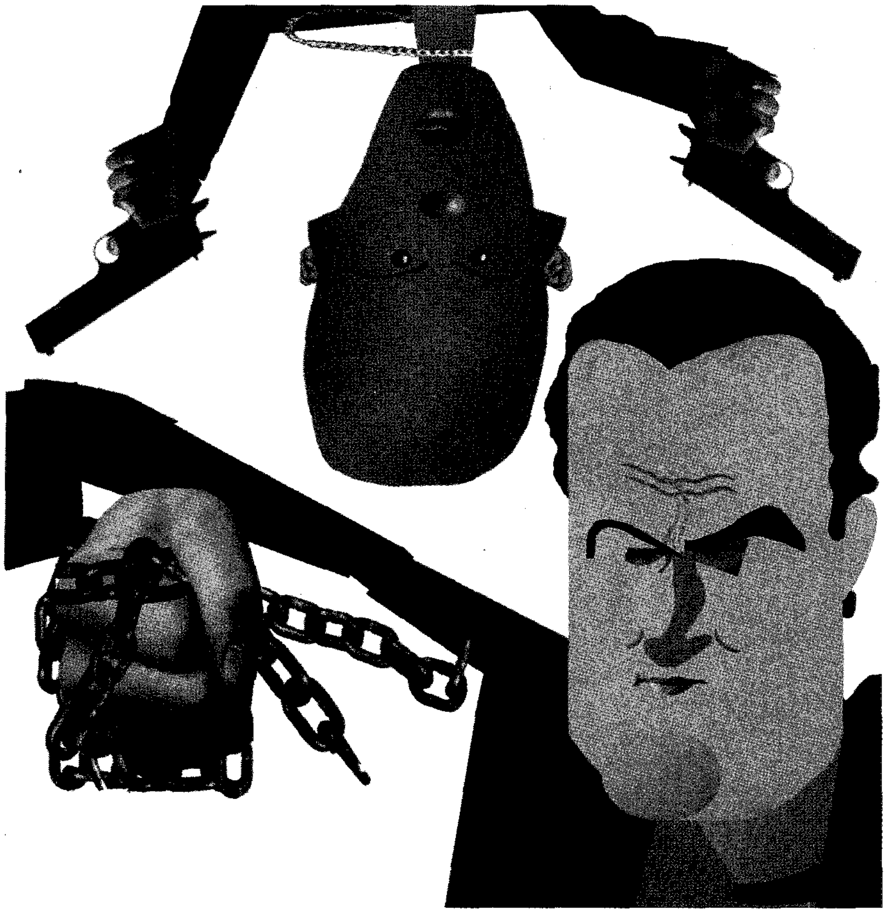
Considine), and they develop a tenuous affection for each other. The writer/director Pawel Pawlikowski vividly captures the makeshift society of asylum seekers, but his main achievement is the movie's emotional calculus—the drama builds from the principles of what we already know, and leads to an intensely bittersweet conclusion.—*M.A.* (Film Forum and State.)



DMX and Steven Seagal in "Exit Wounds," a cop drama opening March 16.

STEPHEN KRONINGER

THE MEXICAN

A shaggy-taco story—one of those south-of-the-border romps in which many people die in odd ways and the Mexicans are either gap-toothed cretins or unspeakably dignified grandees. Brad Pitt is Jerry, a small-time loser sent to Mexico by Los Angeles gangsters to retrieve a fabled handmade pistol; Julia Roberts is his girlfriend, Sam, who loves Jerry but is disgusted with him and flounces off to Las Vegas, where she's kidnapped by a sensitive gay hit man (James Gandolfini). Pitt and Roberts appear together only at the beginning and end of the movie and spend all their time engaging in the kind of noisy, shin-kicking squabble which must be fun to perform but does nothing for the audience. Roberts works much better in her heart-to-heart chats with Gandolfini about life, love, and sex. The writer, J. H. Wyman, and the director, Gore Verbinski, may have been trying for the multilevel playfulness of "Pulp Fiction," but the production veers haplessly between facetiousness and solemnity.—*D.D.* (3/12/01) (Battery Park 16, Beekman, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, Village Theatre VII, and Ziegfeld.)

O BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU?

Although the new Coen brothers picture is set in the Depression, the mood of the tale is a deliberate antidepressant. Dark things happen from time to time, but they are rendered with comic glee. Are the Coens being withering or irresponsible when they turn a fiery rally of Klansmen into an occasion for slapstick? Few dogs could be shaggier than the plot, in which three escaped convicts (George Clooney, John Turturro, and Tim Blake Nelson) take a circuitous route home, tripping over a string of Homeric jokes—sultry sirens on a riverbank, John Goodman as a smilingly brutal Cyclops—along the way. The result is never less than enjoyable, and Clooney looks particularly upbeat, but some viewers may sense a fatal lack of grip; undetained by plausibility, this jest of a movie feels even more directionless than its heroes.—*A.L.* (12/25/00 & 1/1/01) (Battery Park 16, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Union Square.)

POLLOCK

A dogged march through the life and work of Jackson Pollock, starting in the early nineteen-forties, when Lee Krasner (Marcia Gay Harden) first approached him in Greenwich Village, continuing through their marriage and other tempests, and ending gloomily in a car wreck in 1956. The film was directed by Ed Harris, who also plays the artist. His face doesn't much resemble that of Pollock, who looked more like the Wallace Shawn of the West, but Harris has mastered the hunched amble and the glaring gaze. His best scenes are not the boozy rants but the quiet times with a cigarette and a brush—or, latterly, a dripping stick. Pollock's drinking was an interruption of his art, not a spur to it, and the film can do little to connect the two; we are left with a sombre study of discontent, enlivened by the appearance of Jennifer Connelly as the painter's final girlfriend. What she saw in him, by that stage, is anybody's guess. With Val Kilmer pretending to be Willem de Kooning.—*A.L.* (3/5/01) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

SERIES 7

Daniel Minahan's parody of reality television shows is harsh and strident, but it's not without some very funny moments. Shot on video, it presents itself without explanation, encouraging you to feel as though you had stepped into the near future and turned on your TV. The show is called "Series 7" and the contestants, à la "The Running Man," track and kill each other on camera. What's worse (or better) is that the current champion happens to be a pregnant mother (Brooke Smith), and one of the other contestants is her former high-school flame. Minahan takes the manipulative, stagy devices of tabloid TV—along with elements of "The Real World"—and uses them to amplify the drama of his absurd premise. The film eventually trips over its own feet: it wants to play a joke on the audience ("Why are you laughing?") but also to be just a joke ("Please laugh").—*M.A.* (Angelika Film Center.)

THE TASTE OF OTHERS

In the provincial city of Rouen, a married factory owner named Castella (Jean-Pierre Bacri) falls in love with a local actress after seeing her perform in a production of Racine's "Bérénice." The actress, Clara (Anne Alvaro), a refined, lonely woman, hangs out with the other actors and a few local artists—a closed bohemian circle—and is appalled by her wealthy admirer, who tells blundering, unfunny jokes. This pleasingly observant and intelligent movie was written by Bacri and his partner, Agnès Jaoui, who directed the movie (plainly but effectively) and also appears in it as a free-living bar girl. Bacri and Jaoui are fascinated by manners in both the smaller and the larger sense: What holds a group of people together? What relationships make a happy life possible? The movie suggests that small groups united by taste may have their comforts, but without a sudden alteration of taste—sometimes called love—no true movement in life is possible. In French.—*D.D.* (3/12/01) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Village East Cinemas.)

TRAFFIC

Tremendous stuff from the first shot to the last. Steven Soderbergh's vivid and wide-spanning view of the "war on drugs" presents three parallel stories, each with its own look and style: the furtive and ambiguous work of two Mexican state troopers (Benicio Del Toro and Jacob Vargas); the frantic investigations of the new American drug czar (Michael Douglas), who discovers that his beautiful, intelligent sixteen-year-old daughter (Erika Christensen) is freebasing cocaine; and the luxurious life of a San Diego woman (Catherine Zeta-Jones) who tries to hold on to her fortune when her drug-kingpin husband (Steven Bauer) is arrested and made to stand trial. The first story is photographed in tobacco-stain brown, the second with blue filters, the third in bright sunshine—all by Soderbergh himself, who puts the camera on his shoulder and throws us into the middle of the action. Individually, the scenes play with superb toughness, and the over-all impression is one of high intelligence and great good humor threading its way through a morass.—*D.D.* (12/25/00 & 1/1/01) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.)

YI YI (A ONE AND TWO)

Marvellous. It begins with a wedding and ends with a funeral, and, in a style that could only be called radiantly matter-of-fact, Edward Yang's movie encompasses the life of a large Taiwanese family and such central elements of middle-class existence as business ethics and the disillusionment of reaching the age of forty-five. The characters, including an engineer at a troubled computer-hardware firm, live in an Americanized work environment, yet certain emotions nearly lost to Americans, such as modesty and shame, still rule their lives. Yang works very deliberately; you have to slow yourself down to get into the pace of the movie, but once you do every shot seems momentous. In English, Hokkien, and Mandarin.—*D.D.* (1/8/01) (Cinema Village.)

YOU CAN COUNT ON ME

The first-rate actress Laura Linney—bland on the surface but with angry impulses churning underneath—gives a detailed and involving performance as a single working mother in a small and somewhat boring upstate New York town. When her screwup of a kid brother (Mark Ruffalo) returns from Alaska, she's torn between tossing him out and letting him stay on and become a companion to her fatherless son (Rory Culkin). The

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movie was written and directed by the playwright and screenwriter Kenneth Lonergan, who pays close attention to the way so many of us are divided between good and bad impulses—including bad impulses we desperately need to act on if we're not going to feel half-dead. Lonergan's work is quiet but intense, and Ruffalo—dark and sensual and agonizingly confused—gives a heartbreaking performance. With Matthew Broderick and Jon Tenney as Linney's suitors.—*D.D.* (12/18/00) (Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Village East Cinemas.)

ALSO PLAYING

BLOW DRY
Cinema II, Empire 25, and Lincoln Square.
THE CAVEMAN'S VALENTINE
42nd Street E Walk, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.
DOWN TO EARTH
84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.
FAITHLESS (1/29/01)
Cinema Village.
15 MINUTES
Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, East 86th Street Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.
GET OVER IT
Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Gotham Cinema, Kips Bay Theatre, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.
ME YOU THEM
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.
THE PLEDGE (1/22/01)
84th Street Sixplex, New York Twin, and Union Square.
SNATCH (1/29/01)
Battery Park 16, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Waverly.
THE WIDOW OF SAINT-PIERRE
Paris.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

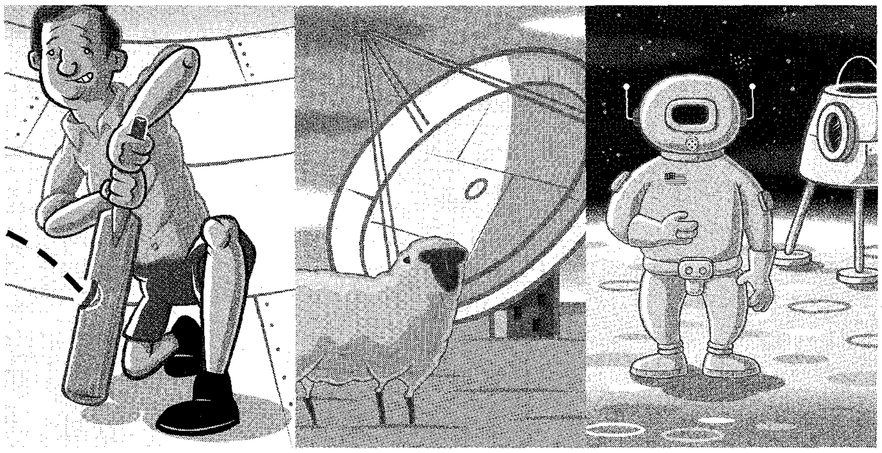
Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St. (945-3418).
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Pioneer, 155 E. 3rd St. (254-3300).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600).
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through April 1: "The Films of William Randolph Hearst." March 17 at 2: "Janice Meredith" (1924, E. Mason Hopper; silent). ♦ March 17 at 4:30: Animated shorts from Hearst's cartoon studio. ♦ March 18 at 2: "Humoresque" (1920, Frank Borzage; silent). ♦ March 18 at 4:30: "Back Pay" (1922, Borzage; silent).
ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—Through March 18: A presentation of François Truffaut's Antoine Doinel series. All films are in French. March 15 at 7, March 17 at 2:30, and March 18 at 9:30: "The 400 Blows" (1959). ♦ March 15 at 9:15, March 17 at 5, and March 18 at 7: "Antoine and Colette" (1962) and "Stolen Kisses" (1968). ♦ March 16 at 7, March 17 at 7:30, and March 18 at 4:45: "Bed and Board" (1970). ♦ March 16 at 9:15, March 17 at 9:45, and March 18 at 2:30: "Love on the Run" (1979).
BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (777-3456)—March 14 at 6:20 and 9:30: "Come and See" (1985, Elem Klimov; in Russian). ♦ March 15 at 7:30: Films by Ed Emshwiller and Hilary Harris, in honor of the thirtieth anniversary of Anthology Film Archives. ♦ Films from Slamdance. March 16 at 4:30 and 6:30: "American Chai" (2001, Anurag Mehta). ♦ March 16 at 9:10: "The Trouble with Lou" (2001, Gregor). ♦ March 17 at 2 and 6:30: "Daydream Believer" (2001, Debra Eisenstadt). ♦ March 17 at 4:30 and 9:10: "Hybrid" (2001, Monteith McCollum). ♦ March 18 at 2 and 6:30: Slamdance shorts. ♦ March 19 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "The Crime of Monsieur Lange" (†). ♦ March 20 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "The Lavender Hill Mob" (1951, Charles Crichton).
CINEMA CLASSICS
332 E. 11th St. (971-1015)—Through March 30: A celebration of the French New Wave. March 14-15 at 8 and 10: "Knife in the Water" (†). ♦ March 16 at 7:40 and 9:50 and March 17-18 at 5:45, 7:55, and 10:05: "Day for Night" (1973, François Truffaut; in French). ♦ March 19-20 at 8 and 10:10: "The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant" (1970, Rainer Werner Fassbinder).
FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—March 14-15 at 1, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, and 9:40: "A Summer's Tale" (1996, Eric Rohmer; in French). ♦ Through April 5: "The World of Agnès Varda." All films are in French. March 16-18 at 3, 6:25, and 9:50: "Cléo from 5 to 7" (1961). ♦ March 16-18 at 1:20, 4:45, and 8:10: "Le Bonheur" (1964). ♦ March 20 at 4 and 8: "Les Créatures" (1965). ♦ March 20 at 2, 6, and 10: "Lions Love (. . . and Lies)" (1968).
MUSEUM OF TELEVISION & RADIO
25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Through April 29: Screenings of "Traffik," the British miniseries that inspired Steven Soderbergh's "Traffic." March 15 at 6 and March 17 at 2: Episodes One and Two. ♦ March 16 at 6 and March 18 at 2: Episodes Three, Four, and Five. ♦ Through May 13: "Nick Park's World: The Eccentric Adventures of Wallace and Gromit." March 14-18 at 1 and March 15-16 at 6.
THE SCREENING ROOM
54 Varick St. (334-2100)—March 16-20 at 3:15, 5, 6:45, 8:30, and 10:15: "Spike & Mike's Sick & Twisted Festival of Animation."
SYMPHONY SPACE
2537 Broadway, at 95th St. (864-5400)—Through May 29: "Cinema Italian Style." March 20 at 7: "The Garden of the Finzi-Continis" (†). ♦ March 20 at 8:45: "The Conformist" (1969, Bernardo Bertolucci; in Italian).
WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (875-5600)—March 9-18: "Rendez-Vous with French Cinema." All films are in French. March 14 at 1 and 6: "Girls Can't Swim" (2000, Anne-Sophie Birot). ♦ March 14 at 3:30 and 8:30 and March 17 at 6:30: "Tomorrow's Another Day" (2000, Jeanne Labrune). ♦ March 15 at 1 and 5:45 and March 17 at 4:15: "Nightshift" (2000, Philippe Le Guay). ♦ March 15 at 3:10, March 16 at 9, and March 18 at 2: "La Captive" (2000, Chantal Akerman). ♦ March 16 at 1 and 6:15 and March 17 at 9: "Sade" (2000, Benoît Jacquot). ♦ March 16 at 3:30 and March 18 at 5: "Hair Under the Roses" (2000, Agnès Obadia and Jean-Julien Chervier). ♦ March 17 at 1 and March 18 at 7:15: "The Town Is Quiet" (2000, Robert Guédiguian).



Opening March 14, "The Dish," about the Apollo moon landing.

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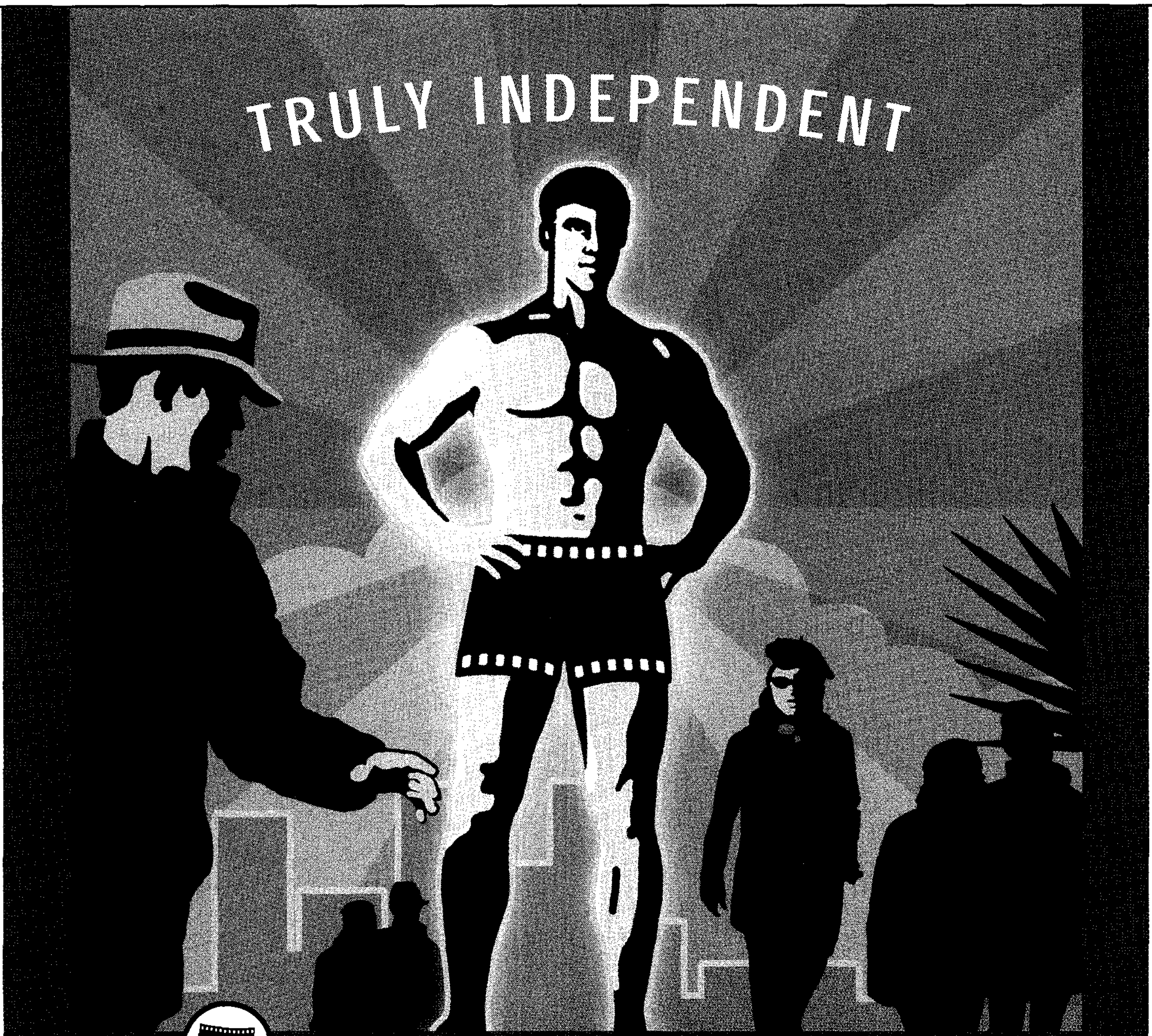

Bermuda International Film Festival

April 20-26, 2001

www.bermudafilmfest.com

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POSTMARK BERMUDA

Bermuda's West End, courtesy of Bermuda Department of Tourism

far from the madding crowd

BY RON BERNTHAL

Hamilton's sidewalks, freshly washed and utterly still, lie in repose beneath an early morning fuchsia sky. I'm sitting in Rock Island Coffee, nursing a cappuccino and croissant and waiting for Bermudian filmmaker Alison Swan to arrive. Sunday morning begins casually during the week-long Bermuda International Film Festival (BIFF), a mid-Atlantic meeting place for filmmakers and film professionals from North America, Europe, and beyond. The café slowly fills with screenwriters, actors, producers, and photographers, drifting in to grab cups of steaming latte and copies of the *Bermuda Sun* before wending their way to tables on the outside deck. Meanwhile, Festival-goers chat up film celebrities and appear surprised at how accessible and relaxed everyone is.

BIFF might be laid back, but it showcases the finest American and European independent films. Included among the fare at BIFF 2001 are "Maze," starring Laura Linney and Rob Morrow who also wrote, produced, and directed the film, and British sensation "Pandaemonium" directed by Julian Temple. A new Documentary section builds on the Festival's reputation for screening works by the world's top documentary filmmakers. The Bermuda Shorts Award is reserved for the Festival Jury's selection of the top short film. This year, a special sidebar tribute will honor the best of Irish cinema.

I begin to wonder if Swan will show. She is not only one of Bermuda's best known filmmakers but also the daughter of Bermuda's former premier, Sir John Swan. Her first feature film, "Mixing Nia," a love story about a mixed-race office worker in New York City, took the grand prize in Houston's 1998 festival along with the Audience Choice Award at BIFF 1998. Grist from the local rumor mill (an institution to be reckoned with on this sun-drenched island only twenty-one miles long and two miles wide) intimated that when Swan—currently living in Los Angeles—returns to Hamilton, she likes to sleep in, especially on Sundays.

Then suddenly, the thirty-something toast of the island is standing before me, looking exquisite in T-shirt, jeans, and tennis shoes, an understated elegance that is Bermuda personified. While UB40's "Can't Help Falling in Love" plays over the café speakers, I hurry to the counter to get her a coffee, and manage to spill some of it on the way back.

"I love coming home to Bermuda," Swan says smiling, her lovely British-Caribbean patois turning the words into music. No attitude here, I think. "I truly believe the island is blessed. Everyone is family to each other, and the beauty here is extraordinary." When asked about her early life in Bermuda, she says, "I didn't see many films. Growing up here was like being under a golden umbrella. That gave me the confidence to go out, take chances, and face big challenges."

In its early years, BIFF's dates overlapped with Cannes Film Festival, and most of the press corps bypassed Bermuda. For the last two years, however, this hasn't been the case. BIFF 2001 opens April 20th with a gala, a few weeks ahead of Cannes. It has an impressive lineup, workshops, and new "Chat With..." filmmakers' luncheons. The Festival also features a Tribute to Excellence in Film (April 21), honoring a prominent member of the world film community and a Wrap Party (April 26). At all these events, filmgoers will have a chance to mix and mingle with filmmakers and film industry guests.

Bermuda handily competes with southern France in terms of Bermuda's resorts, and restaurant staff here welcome customers graciously. Its unique appeal goes farther still. Unlike the film festival experience in cities like New York, Berlin, or Tokyo, the real world outside the theatre doors is a peaceful environment that seems almost dreamlike in its simplicity and old-fashioned traditions. Last year, after watching the award-winning "Human Traffic," about the wild youth culture in the Wales city of Cardiff, I reëmerged from the Little Theatre into the sultry darkness of Hamilton, pleased to find smiling passersby bidding me "Good Evening" in that euphonious Bermudian accent.

The perception of Bermuda as a stodgy British outpost changes quickly once visitors look beyond the white, colonial-style buildings and the profile of Queen Elizabeth II on the island's currency. Sure, there are heated commentaries on cricket in the morning tabloid. But local aesthetics have kept fast-food chains and neon signs at bay, and Bermudian sensitivity to air and noise pollution has restricted rental transportation to mopeds, bicycles, and taxis. So you won't find any hot-shot film producers being whisked around town in limousines, and the only traffic noises emanate from sputtering mopeds as they climb the lush, steep hills behind Hamilton.

While Bermuda may be joining an ever-increasing list of international film festival locations, it's still far enough away from the hubbub to ever risk becoming slick or pretentious. Many of the young filmmakers and actors who come to Bermuda for the festival are first-timers, and they are mesmerized by the island's good looks and timeless lifestyle. Hamilton couldn't be a safer or more picture-perfect town if Disney had designed it.

BERMUDA
INTERNATIONAL
FILM
FESTIVAL

Party-goers and filmmakers at Bermuda International Film Festival. courtesy BIFF

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Bermuda will seem greener than usual next month when the fourth Bermuda International Film Festival pays tribute to Irish cinema with several Gaelic films. A new Documentary section builds on the Festival's reputation for screening provocative works by the world's top documentary filmmakers. The Bermuda Shorts Award is reserved for the Festival Jury's selection of the top short film.

Some of the films expected to attract large audiences are "Maze," "Passing Stones," "Hybrid," and "Dinner and a Movie" (American Showcase). The European Showcase features "Pandaemonium" (Great Britain), "Loners" (Czech Republic), "Mamy Blue" (Sweden), "Jalla!" (Sweden), and "With Great Joy" (Netherlands). The World Cinema includes "Innocence" (Australia), "I Was Born a Black Woman" (Brazil), "Mama Africa" (a series of short films by women directors from Africa), and "Who Is Albert Woo?" (Canada).

Visitors can experience the creative and business sides of the film world by attending a day of free workshops. Confirmed panelists include: Andrew Herwitz (Senior VP, Acquisitions, Miramax), Victor Loewy (Chairman, Motion Picture Group, Alliance Atlantis), Mark Litwak (film attorney and author), Paul Cohen (Manhattan Pictures International), film producer Jon Kilik ("Before Night Falls," "Dead Man Walking," and "Do the Right Thing"), Rod Stoneman (Chief executive, Irish Film Board), and writer-director Roko Belic ("Genghis Blues").

The Opening Night Party on April 20 and the Wrap Party on the 26th give film aficionados a chance to mix and mingle with filmmakers and industry guests. A Tribute to Excellence in Film, to be held in Hamilton on April 21, will honor a prominent member of the world film community.

After the interview, with a break before film screenings, I walk down to the ferry terminal for a trip out to Dockyard, a once a British naval base on Bermuda's West End, that is now converted into restaurants, shops, and art galleries. I look forward to the forty-five-minute trip across the tranquil, Bermuda-blue sea. Gazing toward the island from the ferry's open deck, I see crescent-shaped beaches tucked into pristine coves. Above them, pastel houses dot the gentle, green hills. After a week of mingling and exchanging accolades and film banter, there is no better interlude.

(New York-based Ron Bernthal contributes articles on architecture, film, and travel for publications including *Newsday*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution.* He also teaches at Sullivan County Community College in upstate New York.)

For more information on the Bermuda International Film Festival, April 20–26, call 800-BERMUDA or visit www.bermudatourism.com.

GETTING THERE

Packages start at $760 from New York, $780 from Boston, $849 from Baltimore, $760 from Atlanta and $849 from Philadelphia. The Festival has partnered with the island's finest hotels, including Elbow Beach Hotel, Fairmont Hamilton Princess, Fairmont Southampton Princess, Horizons and Cottages, Stonington Beach Hotel, Waterloo House, and White Sands & Cottages.

JIL SANDER

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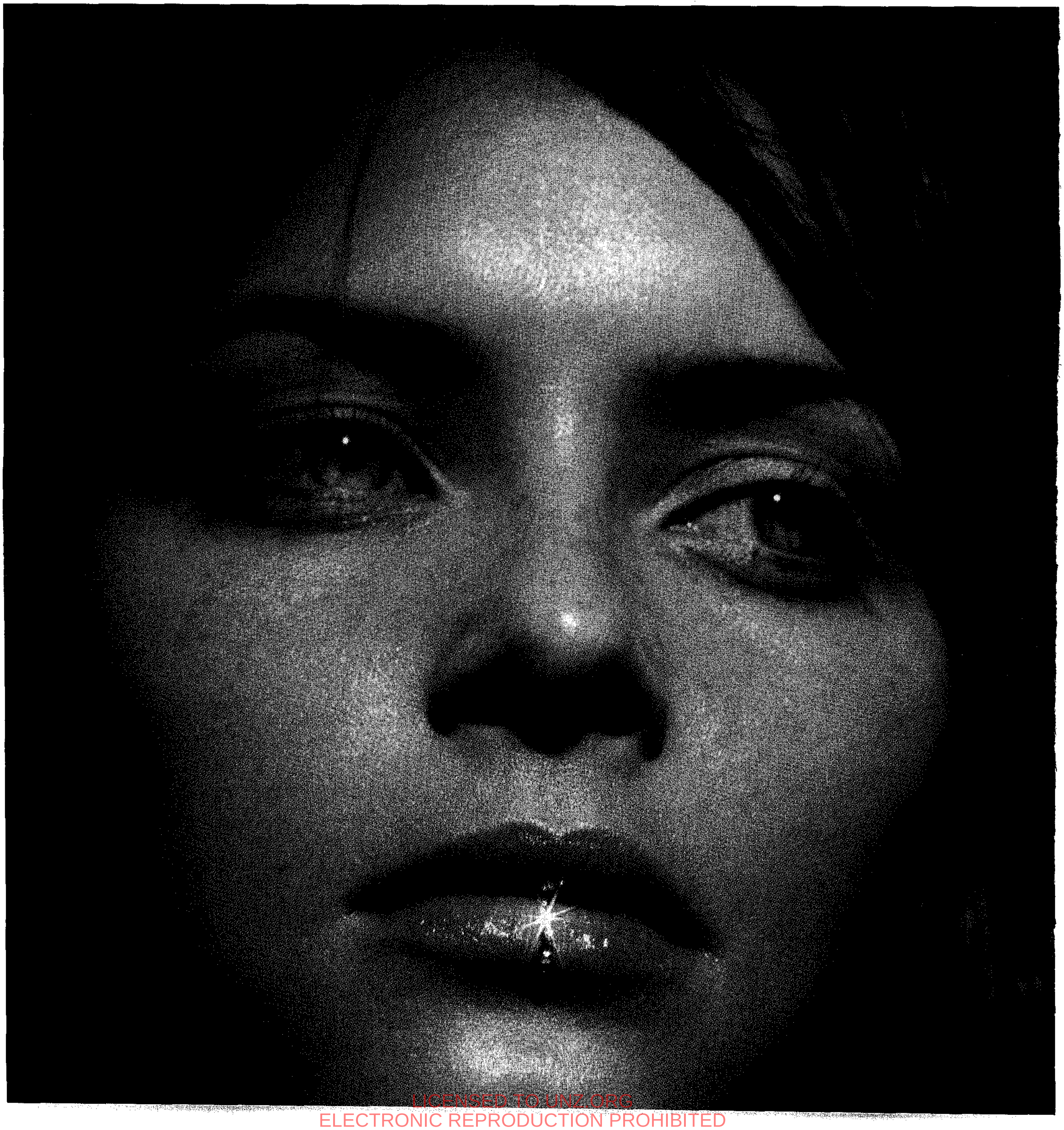


THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT

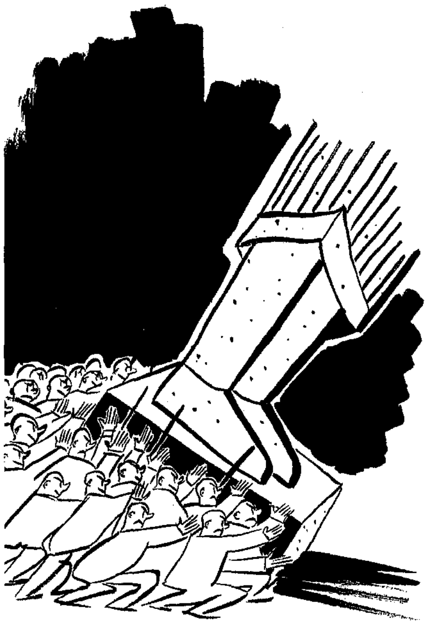
IN THE RUINS

For the better part of two thousand years, the standing Buddhas of Bamiyan kept watch over the midpoint of what was once the Silk Road, the tenuous filigree connecting Greece, Rome, and Persia in the west with India, China, and Mongolia in the east. In the cool, crystalline air of central Afghanistan, a sheer sandstone cliff rises dramatically from the floor of a high plateau. At either end of this natural wall, in a pair of towering vertical niches, the Buddhas were carved directly from the rock, sometime around the fifth century A.D. The larger one was as tall as a twenty-story building, the smaller two-thirds that height. What made them unique was not only their size but their style, a fusion of Hellenistic and Asian; their bodies were draped in flowing Greek robes. In their early glory, they were painted in brilliant reds and blues, their heads and hands gilded. Centuries of weather and vandalism roughened their features and returned them to the sandy color of the surrounding stone, but visitors still invariably described them in the language of awe.

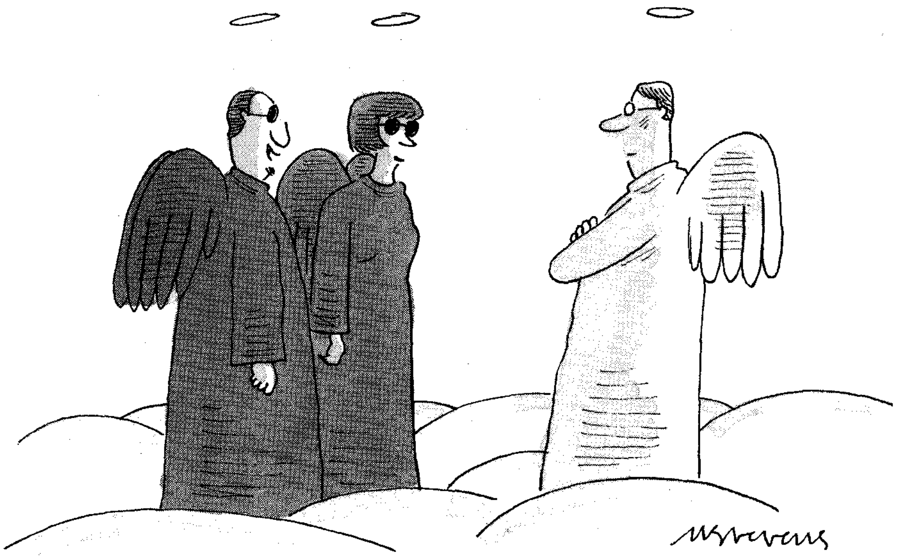
ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

These marvellous creations must now be spoken of in the past tense. Within the last few days, soldiers of the Taliban, using rocket launchers, tank artillery, and strapped-on packets of dynamite, have apparently undertaken the job of reducing them to rubble; thousands of smaller works have already been ruined. As an unwanted consequence of twenty years of foreign invasion and interference, the Taliban are the ruling gang of Afghanistan. Their name is the plural of *talib*, meaning seminarian or religious student. Their teacher and supreme leader, one Mullah Muhammad Omar, instructed them thusly, in an edict issued a couple of weeks ago: "These idols have been gods of the infidels."

What is happening in Afghanistan is terrible and familiar. The historical record is nearly as replete with the destruction of art and culture as it is with the destruction of human life. Sometimes the damage is collateral, a side effect of killing the people in proximity to the objects; most of the aerial bombing of the century just past falls into that category. Sometimes the destruction is admonitory. A city that resisted Rome's legions would be razed, while one that surrendered would be spared. Two millennia later, the Allied bombing of Dresden had a similar purpose: the city's treasures, which were of no military importance, were destroyed in order to demoralize the German civilian population. Sometimes the destruction results from the carelessness of war. The great library at Alexandria, legend has it, went up in flames (along with much of the literature of the ancient world) when fire spread from burning ships in the battle between Caesar and Pompey; the Parthenon was gutted when, in 1687, the Turks used it as a powder magazine during a battle with the Venetians.



Somewhat rarer is the direct destruction of art objects as a way of making a political point—iconoclasm as pamphleteering. Anglo-American culture was little diminished when New Yorkers greeted the news of the Declaration of Independence by exuberantly trashing an equestrian statue of George III, in 1776. But Russian culture did suffer when, after 1917, thousands of Tsarist statues and Orthodox churches and icons were ground to dust. After 1989, in many of the same places, statues of Lenin met a similar fate. Like almost all



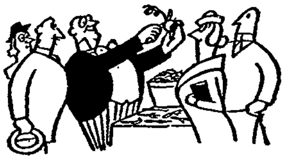
"We're from Manhattan."

public statuary, these were works of propaganda. But, just as many works of art have an element of propaganda (Shakespeare's histories promoted the image of the Tudor monarchy), many works of propaganda have an element of art, an element that becomes more apparent as the propagandistic urgency fades. In a park on the outskirts of Budapest, three dozen bulky works of heroic Socialist Realism have been assembled. Huddled together like refugees, they are oddly moving to look at. They already exert a pull that is distinguishable from both their original shabby political intent and their present forlornness.

What makes the Taliban's depredations seem especially sad and awful is how gratuitous they are, even in the pinched terms of their perpetrators. Unlike the defacing of saints during the Reformation in Europe or the mutual torchings of places of worship in contemporary India, this is not a crime of passion. Islam faces no challenge in Afghanistan except from its own variations. To destroy these ancient monuments because their builders followed the way of the Buddha is like setting forest fires because the Celts worshipped in sacred groves. Though the lesson is not worth the cost, the Taliban's crimes against memory and spirit—which are more than matched by its crimes against men and women—are a reminder that the profession of religion and the practice of virtue need not go together. Acts that are "faith-based" stand a good chance of being beneficial to humanity, but not a better chance than acts that are skepticism-based—that is, grounded in an understanding of morality that does not rely on fear (or love) of divine authority (or any other kind of authority, for that matter). Whether you think it was said by God or by man, "by their fruits ye shall know them."

—*Hendrik Hertzberg*

DEPT. OF IMMORTALITY
GINSBERG'S LAST SOUP



On March 19, 1997, Allen Ginsberg drew up a shopping list in his newly acquired loft, on East Thirteenth Street. He signed and dated the list—as he did with nearly every scrap of paper that passed through his hands, for the benefit of future scholars—and then gave it to a friend, who went out to buy the ingredients Ginsberg needed for a meal he had never prepared before. He was going to cook fish chowder.

The next evening, Ginsberg served the soup to a handful of friends and stashed the leftovers in the freezer. A little more than two weeks later, on April 5th, he died, suddenly, of liver cancer. He had already sold his archives, in 1994, to Stanford University, for a million dollars (which paid for the loft), and the rest of his possessions were dispersed at auction a year after his death. About the only trace of Ginsberg remaining on East Thirteenth Street was the leftover fish chowder.

Two jars of the soup survive in the freezer in the loft, which is currently shared by a medical resident and the offices of the Allen Ginsberg Trust. Bob Rosenthal, Ginsberg's secretary and one of the people who cleared out the loft before the auction, says that he felt pangs of grief tossing out the poet's dried beans and stale kasha, and just could not bring himself to throw out the soup.

"As I was cleaning out the refrigerator, a light bulb went on in my head—an exhibit called 'The Last Soup of Allen Ginsberg,'" he said the other day. "It started out as a purely whimsical idea, but when I told people about it everyone smiled. Then it started to snowball."

Rosenthal wants to put the chowder in a museum. He imagines a multimedia display built around it, with tapes of Ginsberg reading poems about food, such as "C'mon Pigs of Western Civilization Eat More Grease," or, perhaps, the passage in "Kaddish" in which he depicts his mother's escalating madness by describing the miserable things she cooked for him: "a plate of cold fish—chopped raw cabbage dript with tapwater . . . more and more disconsolate food." Rosenthal imagines that one jar of the stuff could be preserved in some sort of refrigerated vitrine, "or maybe they could irradiate it," he said. The contents of the other jar could be analyzed by anthropologists. "There is a *culture* in that goop, of the greengrocers and fishmongers of the Lower East Side at the end of the twentieth century," he said.

By his friends' accounts, Ginsberg delighted in offering nourishment to anyone who visited him. He loved making soup so much that he had a special ledge installed outside his kitchen window, where he could cool his twelve-gallon stockpot. Ginsberg's inspiration for the fish chowder probably came from a dish of scrod prepared for him by Rosenthal's wife, Rochelle Kraut. A note on the March 19th shopping list confirms this:

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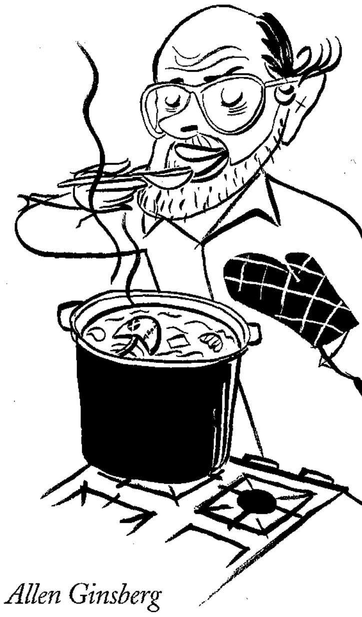
"Ask Shelley how she cooks fish & how extract fish heads. Her scrod the other day was delicious—which herbs?" So many things found their way into the pot—parsnips, cilantro, tofu, mussels in their shells—that Kraut, fielding frequent calls from Ginsberg, assumed he was brewing up several soups at once.

An old friend of Ginsberg's, Raymond Foye, dropped by the loft that afternoon and had a taste. He recalls that it was "delicious." Another friend, Lucien Carr, who is the father of the novelist Caleb Carr, sampled the chowder but did not share Foye's assessment. "It was awful," he said.

After a heat wave two summers ago caused brownouts on the Lower East Side—necessitating a hasty relocation of the chowder, by cab, to a safe freezer on the Upper East Side—Rosenthal asked Ginsberg's friend Jason Shinder to help him find a permanent home for the soup.

"I called the Met, I called the Guggenheim," Shinder said the other day. "They said, 'You're crazy.' "

Then Shinder thought of an institution that was quirky enough to mount the exhibit: the Museum of Jurassic Technology, in Los Angeles, which is a repository of anthropological exotica. He called the director, David Wilson, and explained the situation. Wilson liked the idea. He saw that Ginsberg's soup would be right at home alongside the museum's displays depicting such kitchen curiosities as mouse pies (which were believed to cure stammering) and medieval "sin-eaters" (people hired to consume chunks of bread that had been passed over a corpse). "There's a great deal of enthusiasm here," Wilson says. "And I have an image in my mind of how the exhibit would look." The first requirement, he says, is to find a benefactor who would be willing to donate a "high visibility deep-freeze unit."


Allen Ginsberg

Even if the soup is preserved in cryogenic stasis, it will probably never again be fit to eat. Rosenthal said, "I tell people, 'Eat this soup if you want to see Allen.' "

—*Steve Silberman*

AT THE RINK
PUCK NAKED

After practice on a recent morning at Madison Square Garden, the Russian hockey star Alexei Kovalev, who plays forward for the Pittsburgh Penguins, was removing his pads in the visitors' dressing room. As he did so, he talked casually with Bill Clement, a retired player who now does hockey commentary on ESPN, about scoring goals, which is something that Kovalev has become very good at.

"When you're on a breakaway, how do you decide whether to shoot or deke?" Clement asked.

"Well," Kovalev said. "It depends." He had removed his gloves, his helmet, his practice jersey, his elbow pads, his shoulder pads, his skates, and his pants—pounds and pounds of sweat-soaked gear. He still had on a black turtleneck, a protective cup (over a pair of black gym shorts), shin pads, and hockey socks—big black thigh-high knit stockings held up by an industrial-strength garter belt. "If I'm going to deke, I have to make sure the goalie can't reach me with the stick. If I'm going to shoot, I don't want to wait too long."

"What are you looking for?" Clement asked.

"I'm looking to see what the goalie is going to do," Kovalev said. He unclipped his garter belt, then peeled off the socks and the shin pads, which fell to the floor like a giant pair of dead scarabs. "I'm looking for him to move or show something." In a deep, Russian-accented voice, he elaborated on some of his breakaway tricks, speaking quickly, and with great enthusiasm, through his turtleneck as he pulled it over his head.

"He doesn't know," a teammate called out. "He's making it up!" The voice belonged to Mario Lemieux, the owner of the Penguins (he plays for the team, too), who sat a few stalls down, buttoning a blue dress shirt.

Kovalev ignored him, focussing instead on Clement's hypothetical goalie. "All the time, I am keeping the good distance between me and him," he said. He tossed aside the garter belt. Then it was off with the cup and, finally, the shorts. "I am telling him, 'Look at my face!' "

"Right," Clement said. "Create a diversion."

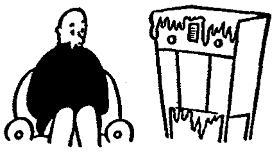
Kovalev was naked now, standing in the middle of the locker room, six feet two, two hundred and fifteen pounds, with his arms out in front of him as though he were bearing down alone on a goalie, with the puck on his stick. "You can show here"—he feinted left. "You can show there"—he feinted right. "You don't know where you're going to shoot"—and he froze.

Clement stood before him, in an expensive-looking camel-hair coat, storing this information for the broadcast that night of the Penguins' game against the Rangers. Now if Kovalev could only get a breakaway . . .

Kovalev straightened up. "I'll try to get one," he said, thoughtfully. Then he headed for the showers.

—*Nick Paumgarten*

DEPT. OF FALSE ALARMS
THE NO-SHOW SNOW



Although blizzards are often described in the apocalyptic language of big weather, they evoke emotions unique to snow. Unlike hurricanes and tornadoes, which provoke as much dread as wonder, a blizzard is anticipated mostly with pleasure, at least on the East Coast. Whether it is the never forgotten thrill of a snow day or the enchanting silence of a momentarily muffled street, people invest a lot of desire in snow.

So when, last week, forecasters announced that a blizzard was approaching, the polis flung itself into preparations with gusto, even though spring was near and the winter had been exceptionally snowy already. Citizens who live within five minutes of the exotic cuisines of four continents enjoyed the rare delight of stocking up on essentials. In the nineteenth century, urban dwellers went to zoos and parks to invoke the idea of wildness; in the twenty-first century, we buy cans of beans and extra batteries for the flashlight.

By Monday morning, with hundreds of flights cancelled and schools closed, it began to appear that the storm would not be as bad as had been hoped (um, feared). The public's response was anger and disappointment, not relief. (The Weather Channel's Jim Cantore, broadcasting live from Times Square, was harassed by hecklers yelling "Where's the storm?") By Monday evening, newscasters were adroitly shifting their focus from the storm to the hype. The network anchormen gently scolded their local affiliates for all the big talk. The Weather Channel, unable to cover the meta-story, was forced to gut it out with the elements themselves, promising that the storm would eventually arrive.

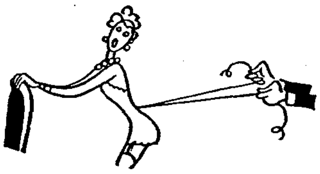
Weather forecasting is supposed to help people avoid calamity, but there came a point in Monday's coverage when the purpose of the updates seemed to be to guarantee that calamity would prevail. *Don't fret, your life will be significantly disrupted soon* was the tone, as meteorologists shifted from being prognosticators of the storm to being advocates for it. "I promise you it's going to go downhill fast from here," the Weather Channel's Bill Keneely said. Rarely has so much rested on snowflakes. It seemed as if the storm might enter the same empirically unknowable state as the recent Presidential election, less a matter of data than of spin.

"We try not to be defensive, but we're human," Elliot Abrams, the senior vice-president of Accuweather, said on Thursday. He added that weathermen are so thin-skinned about wrong forecasts that there is a rule around the Accuweather office: if someone blows a forecast, his colleagues are not allowed to mention it the next day. "We are trying to avoid forecaster rage," he said.

Finally, after everyone had given up on the storm, it began to snow. By dawn on Tuesday, it was snowing pretty hard. But because the snow had been decried for everything it was not, it was hard at first to enjoy it for what it was: not a "weather event," or a storm with an impressive-sounding name—just a nice little snowfall. We had gone through all the emergency preparations with no snow, and, now that it was snowing, the schools opened and people went back to work. Everyone got snowed on. And it was fun, after all.

—*John Seabrook*

PERFECT FIT
THE RIGHT BRA



Births are up, and business is brisk at the Orchard Corset, the Lower East Side shop that has been lifting and separating New York women since 1926. One morning not long ago, the line inside was five deep with pregnant ladies, nursing moms, and other full-figured women in need of frontal minimizing, which is the shop's specialty.

Standing at the head of the queue was Ralph Berk, a middle-aged Orthodox Jew who runs the store with his mother. Since he was an infant, Berk has spent many of his days in the cramped shop, surrounded by teetering stacks of women's smalls. A hefty man with tangled tzitzis and arms that explode from his sleeves, he manages the shop with minimal fuss. The first customer in the line was a Latin teen-ager, who was falling out of her bra.

"Look there," he said, taking two fingers and pointing to the sides of her bosom. "You're popping."

The girl resisted. "I am a 34-C," she said.

Berk shook his head, spun her around, and inspected her back. "Look at these folds. You are a 36-D," he said, handing her a bra. "Take it."

She muttered in Spanish. Berk muttered right back. "Do not be a baby," he said, in slow but accurate Spanish. "Go see Mommy."

The girl disappeared behind a curtain that divides the shop and acts as a dressing room, and Berk's mother hoisted her into her new brassiere. Berk peeked over the curtain.

"There, see," he said. "I have the eye."

Berk believes it is "the eye" that enables him to assess in a matter of seconds the exact measurement and taste of each customer. Clients walk in, are optically sized up, and then are handed what he supposes they desire. There are no display racks. Berk is the one who decides whether a woman is a Satin Fantasy or a Nobody's Perfect.

"Next!"

A new mom needed a nursing bra.

"How old's the baby?"

"Seven months."

Berk bit his bottom lip, then toddled off. He returned with the latest in nursing engineering. He stuck his hands in the cups and opened the feeding flap with his thumb and forefinger.

"See? No snaps. Only slit. Easy. See?"

The new mom beamed.

"Go try," Berk said, still working the flap like a puppet.

Next up was a woman in her sixth month of pregnancy. "I've never worn a bra," she confessed.

Berk looked alarmed. "Let me look," he said. She tugged down her shirt to reveal a cotton camisole. He gasped.

"That is *nothing!*" he shouted. He rushed to the shelves and began tearing down boxes. He selected two 36-Bs.

"You like sexy?" he asked. The mother-to-be shrugged.

"I give panties to try, too. No maternity. Thongs."

He pulled the first bra on over the woman's shirt and snapped the back.

"Here, you try," he said, handing her the underpants—red lace, with elastic up the back. She reluctantly joggled them up over her trousers. The fabric scrunched like a fan.

"Sexy, yes?" he asked.

"I guess," she said.

"It is the bra Oprah wears. Very good. Half price."

He paused, trained his X-ray beams on her belly.

"A boy," he said confidently.

"Really?" she asked, her eyes wide. "Are you sure?"

"Eight pounds."

—*Allison Glock*

THE FINANCIAL PAGE

WALL STREET ANALYSTS: WHO NEEDS 'EM?

The Age of the Analyst is dead on Wall Street. In the nineteen-nineties, stock analysts—you know, the people who put out those "buy," "hold," and (every once in a long while) "sell" ratings on stocks—became celebrities. They made regular appearances on CNBC, were fêted by the business press, and moved markets with even the most arbitrary-seeming pronouncements. The best-known analysts started taking home salaries previously reserved for dealmakers and ballplayers. With a direct line to corporate C.E.O.s, analysts seemed to have the closest thing to inside information you could get (legally, at least) on Wall Street. Whatever was coming, they'd see it first.

But in the last five months the clued-in analyst has been exposed as clueless, and the equity-analysis game has proved to be something of a scam. That's because Wall Street, in those five months, has entered the era of the blindside. Hundreds of companies—Oracle, Yahoo!, Whirlpool, and Home Depot among them—have stepped forward to announce that their earnings and sales were going to fall well short of what had been expected. Of course, every quarter brings some bad news, but in the most recent quarter there have been more than six times as many negative pre-announcements as there were a year ago. Meanwhile, scores of stocks that, a year ago, analysts were exhorting investors to buy have since collapsed. With few exceptions, analysts didn't see the trouble coming and didn't warn their clients to get out of the way. And that raises a question: If you're being paid to predict the future, and you have no idea what the future holds, why are you being paid at all?

The answer is that analysts shouldn't be paid to predict the future. And, until relatively recently, they weren't. Analysts, at least as we know them now, didn't really exist on Wall Street until the fifties. For decades after that, they were about as glamorous as accountants. Analysts focussed on analyzing companies and industries instead of on the futile task of predicting the short-term movements of stock prices. Analysts were wonks, not seers.

Two things changed this. First, the bull market of the last twenty years fostered an insatiable appetite for financial information. Millions of new investors pouring in to the market needed—or wanted—to be told what to buy. Second, in the nineteen-nineties, corporate America awakened to the virtues of "managed earnings." Beating expectations became a surefire way of giving your stock a short-term boost. Companies figured out that the easiest way to earn more than people expect you to is to make sure people don't expect much. So companies started managing the analysts, poor-mouthing their own prospects and spoon-feeding them privileged information. Instead of having to do the legwork—talking to customers and suppliers, burrowing through financial documents—the analyst could sit back and take dictation.

"In the last few years, it was really easy to be a Homer Simpson-type analyst," Brent Thill, a software analyst at Credit Suisse First Boston, says. "You see Homer at work, and he's got his feet up on his desk, he's eating doughnuts, and every once in a while he looks at a display screen. Without beating up on other analysts, I'd say there were definitely lots of analysts who could pull a Homer Simpson—get by with calling a company every so often to find out how things were going. Companies would tell you enough so that you could wing it. You didn't actually have to dig."

The great paradox of the analysts' reign was that, as their stature grew, the quality of their analysis plummeted. Too many analysts pulled a Homer, while others got caught up in the prediction racket, focussing their energies on issuing stock-price targets and earnings estimates. All this may have fattened their bank accounts and boosted their Q ratings, but it didn't help investors. Not every analyst eschewed the legwork for the limelight; the good ones continued to crank out penetrating research. But most did not.

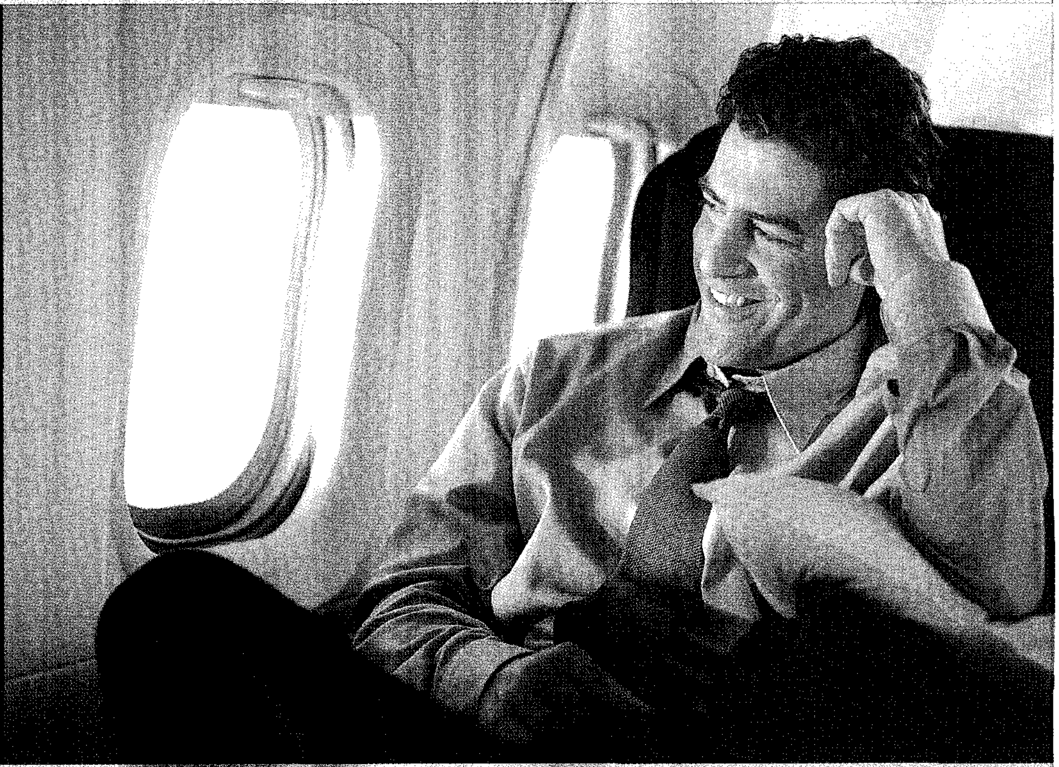
In any case, the party's over now, thanks to the market's swoon and to a new S.E.C. rule, Regulation FD, which effectively prohibits companies from telling analysts anything in private that they aren't also disclosing to the public. The removal of that privileged access has left analysts with no discernible role; whatever it is that they've been doing for the last decade—channelling company pronouncements, making headlines with ludicrous forecasts—they can't get away with it anymore. This is no great loss. Even with all the institutional access, analysts have performed poorly in their attempts to estimate earnings and pick stocks. One exhaustive study, which tracked more than three hundred and sixty thousand recommendations over a twelve-year period, found that, for the big companies, which together make up most of the stock market's value, analysts' ratings turn out to be predictive of nothing. Darts, anyone?

It's easy enough to blame the analysts for all this. They're the ones stuck looking stupid, as their picks go to zero. But the real blame goes to Wall Street, which rewards bombast over rigor. Who wouldn't pretend that he knew what NetZero's share price would be three months from now in exchange for a hefty salary and an open invitation to appear on TV?

So here's an idea: wipe out the ratings system. No more "buy," "sell," and "hold." No more price targets. Analysts can gather and process information, and then let the people who are actually investing the money decide what to do with it. Analysts analyzing—what a concept.

—*James Surowiecki*

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN



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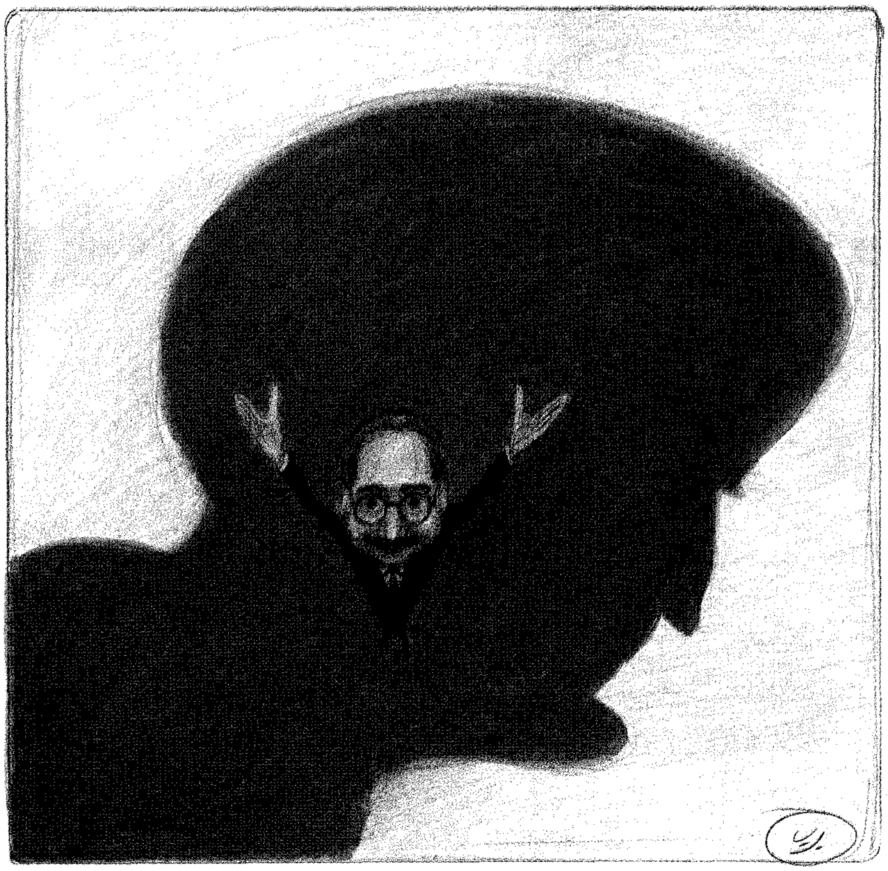
AROUND CITY HALL

THAT'S FREDDY

Can race politics make Fernando Ferrer the next mayor?

BY ELIZABETH KOLBERT



Ferrer likes to say, "I'm not Rudy Lite," implying that the other candidates are.

Four years ago, Fernando Ferrer, the Bronx Borough President, held a fund-raiser at the New York Hilton. At the time, he was running for mayor, and thanks to the efforts of his press operation, which had given the event a big buildup, there were lots of reporters in attendance. Unfortunately for Ferrer, the fund-raiser turned out to be a genuinely newsworthy event: some of the tables were half empty, some were three-quarters empty, and at least one was occupied by a single, lonely donor. The next day, New York 1, the city's cable news station, ran footage of the scene on an almost hourly basis, and within a week Ferrer had dropped out of the race.

Ferrer, the son of Puerto Rican immigrants, had founded his campaign on the notion that New Yorkers would rally around a moderate Hispanic from the outer boroughs. He portrayed his opponents for the Democratic nomination—the Reverend Al Sharpton and Ruth Messinger, the Manhattan Borough President—as unelectably far to the left, and, during the run-up to the primary, he conspicuously switched his position on the death penalty, from opposition to support. In an interview with the *Times*, he labelled late-term abortions "barbaric," and declared, "Every time a mother hiccups, that's no reason to abort a child."

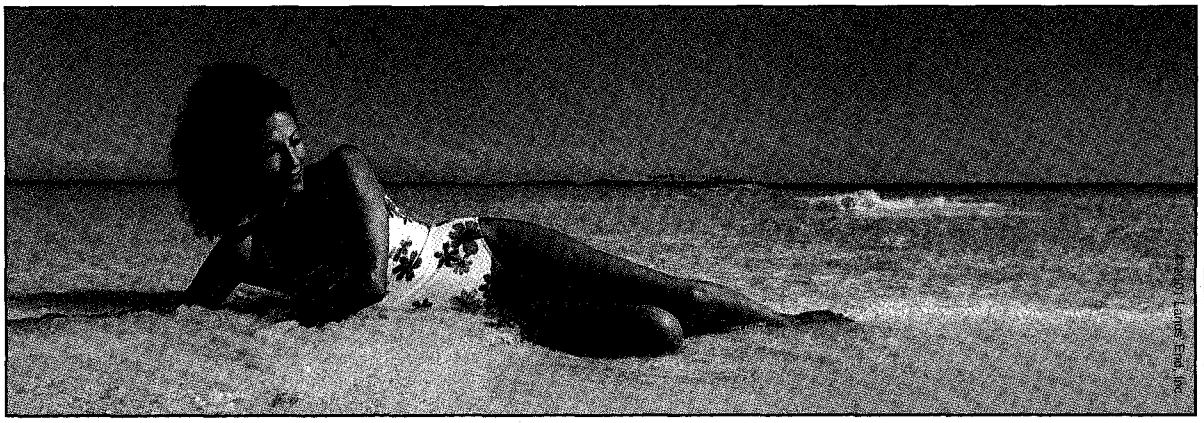
Ferrer is running for mayor once again, but this time he has a new idea. Instead of relying on a coalition of Hispanics and whites, he is trying to build a coalition of Hispanics and blacks. He is, as a consequence, less interested in seeming sensible or centrist than in seeming passionate and radical. "I'm not Rudy Lite," he likes to say, in a way that implies that his three white opponents—City Council Speaker Peter Vallone, City Comptroller Alan Hevesi, and Public Advocate Mark Green—all are.

It has been well over a hundred years since any single ethnic group has been numerous enough to elect a mayor on its own, and control of City Hall has depended on which groups could agree to work together for common benefit—the Wasps and the Jews, the Irish and the Jews, the Irish and the Italians. In keeping with this, the Tammany sage George Washington Plunkitt once described the organization's political ideal as a man who "eats corned beef and kosher meat with equal nonchalance, and it's all the same to him whether he takes off his hat in the church, or pulls it down over his ears in the synagogue." Jews, for example, were among the most ardent backers of Fiorello LaGuardia, and Italians were key to the coalition that elected Mayor William O'Dwyer.

David Dinkins, the city's first black mayor, offered an updated version of this basic New York formula—one in which race replaced ethnicity as the essential category. In 1989, he received the support of ninety-seven per cent of black voters, seventy per cent of Hispanics, and just enough Jews—forty per cent—to eke out a victory. Four years later, Rudy Giuliani didn't so much refute the logic of the Dinkins coalition as use it against him. During his tenure as mayor, Giuliani has made it almost a matter of principle not to consult with any minority groups in running the city.

The racial breakdown of the current Democratic field clearly represents a huge advantage for Ferrer, if race actually is—or, at least, can be made to seem—the central issue. According to New York election law, a candidate needs just forty per cent of the votes cast to win the primary on a first ballot. (In the event that no candidate reaches forty per cent, there's a runoff between the top two contenders.) With enough black votes, Ferrer could, potentially, reach forty per cent without needing the

VICTOR JUHASZ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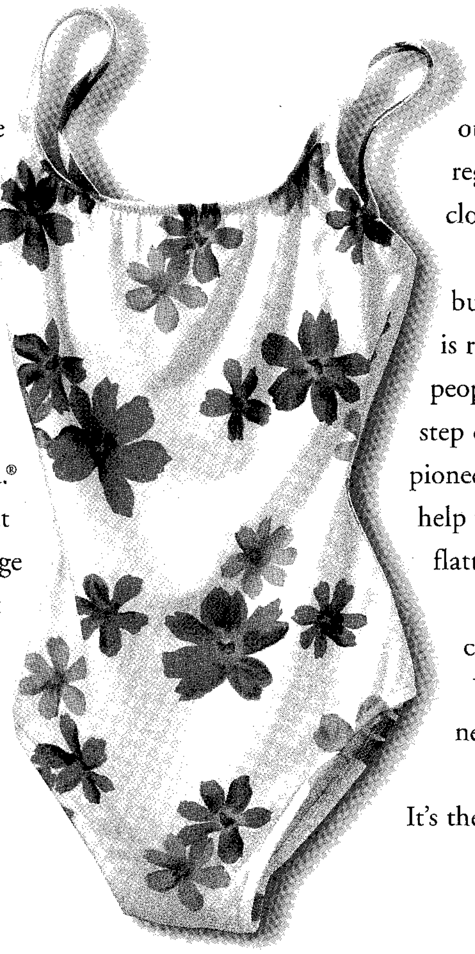

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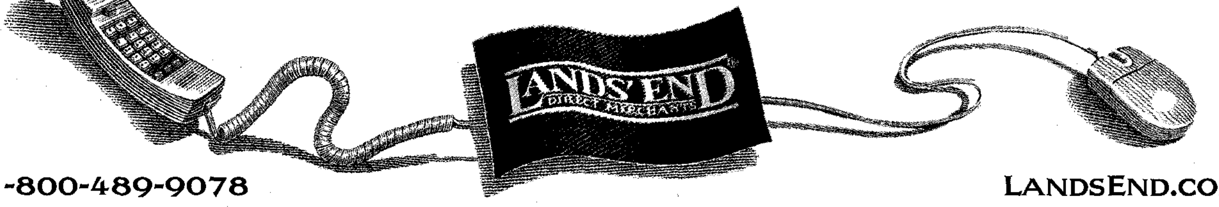

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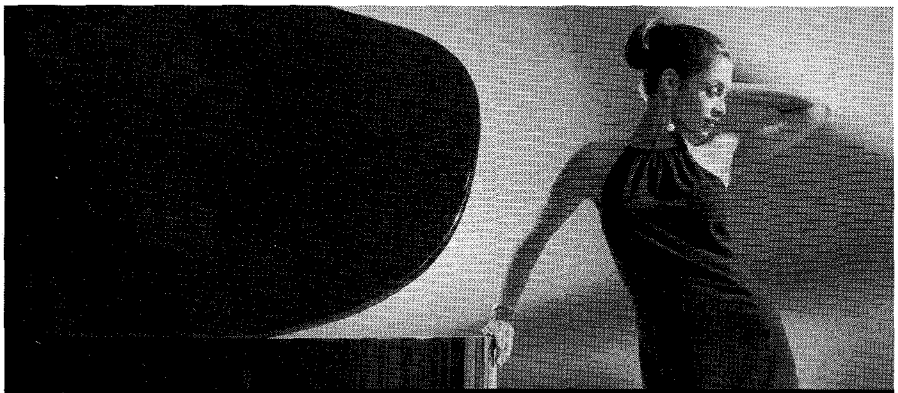

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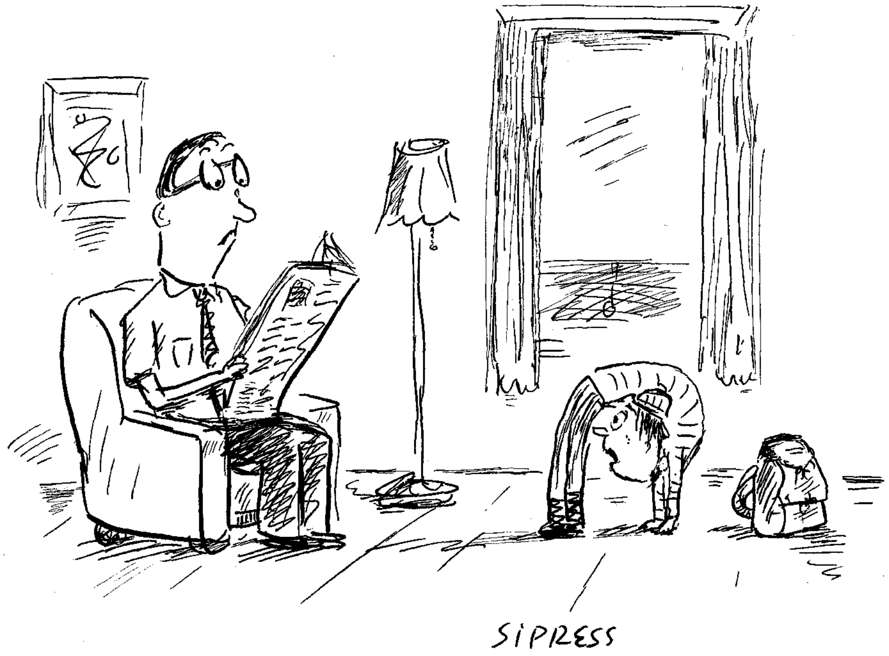
support of a single white New Yorker. Of course, just because Ferrer is making a ham-handed pitch for black support doesn't mean he will get it. At the same time, it would represent a basic misunderstanding of coalition politics to assume that just because his pitch is ham-handed it won't work.

Last month, I spent a cold, gray Sunday with Ferrer as he made his rounds through the city. His first stop was the thirteenth annual scholarship breakfast of the Beth Jacob–Beth Miriam School, which took place in the basement of Young Israel of Pelham Parkway, in the Bronx. As the breakfast began, about thirty students wearing white-and-blue Beth Jacob–Beth Miriam T-shirts filed onto the stage—a dim, closetlike structure—for a choral presentation. In spite of the season, they began with a Hanukkah song, which they followed up with "Puff the Kosher Dragon."

Ferrer was supposed to speak toward the middle of the program, but in deference to his busy schedule he was moved up to the top, right after "Chazzan Man," an unorthodox Orthodox rendition of Billy Joel's "Piano Man." ("It's six forty-five in the morning / The regular crowd shuffles in / There's an old man sitting next to me / With his tallis and wrapped in tefillin.") Ferrer was introduced, to much laughter, as Efraim Ferrerowitz, and referred to himself, to even more laughter, as the president of B'nai Yankees.

Fifty years old, Ferrer is a compact man with a graying mustache, a creeping bald spot, and round bifocals. His sense of humor runs to the sardonic, and although he now makes a big point of describing himself as "angry" or "offended," he rarely seems either.

Ostensibly, Ferrer was at the breakfast to present an award to one of his aides, Kalman Yeger, an earnest-looking young man who does community outreach on his behalf. Ferrer praised Yeger's devotion, saying he worked 24/6. "I don't want to get him in trouble with his rabbi," he explained. On his way out, Ferrer took off his yarmulke, which was decorated with the Yankees' logo and a tiny baseball bat, and, for safekeeping, slipped it back into a little plastic bag.



"I'm running away to join the Cirque du Soleil."

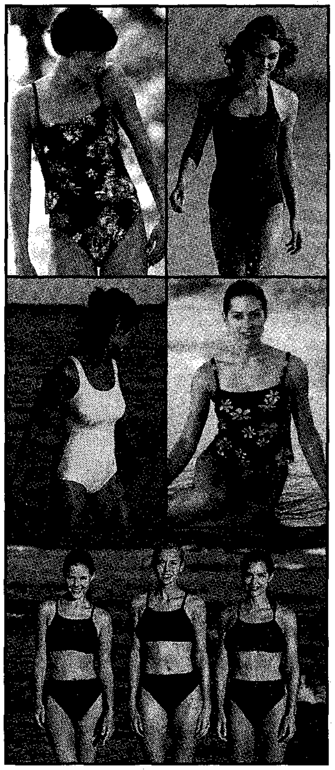
• •

Ferrer came of age in the days when the Bronx Democratic organization was still a robust (and largely Jewish) enterprise, and he got ahead not by challenging the machine but by working within it. When he won his first elective post, as a city councilman, in 1982, he was a Democratic district leader and was working for the Borough President, Stanley Simon. Later, when the Wedtech scandal brought down Simon, as well as much of the rest of the machine, Ferrer was picked to succeed him. "When you think about it, Ferrer's a basic clubhouse guy" was how one close observer of city politics put it to me. "He's like Vallone, except he's Hispanic." (Vallone, an Italian-American, came up through the Queens Democratic organization.)

In this respect, Ferrer's 1997 campaign made more sense, or at least required less adjustment for him, than the race he is running now. Ferrer and his wife, Aramina, an elementary-school principal, now live in a co-op apartment in Riverdale, but they used to live in a house in Kingsbridge, and when Ferrer complains about how the house was broken into, or about how often his car has been vandalized, he sounds like a typical middle-class New Yorker, who could be of any race or ethnicity.

On the same day that Ferrer visited Young Israel, he went to a service in a black church in Harlem, a luncheon for disabled Democrats in midtown, and a reception and vigil commemorating the second anniversary of the police shooting of Amadou Diallo, a Guinean immigrant, back up in the Bronx. It was a tiring day—Ferrer told me that at the Harlem church he had felt like falling asleep, because the building was so warm—and it is possible that he had simply grown weary by the end. Still, the only group he seemed really to connect with was the first one, at the synagogue. The Diallo reception was filled with African-Americans who, simply by virtue of being there, had proved they were politically active, yet Ferrer spent most of his time sitting with the Bronx Democratic chief, Roberto Ramirez, who is running his campaign. Afterward, one prominent black politician who had also been there told me he had been puzzled by Ferrer's lack of enthusiasm. "That's Freddy," he sighed.

Obviously, it would be counterproductive for Ferrer to come right out and say that African-Americans ought to vote for him because he's Hispanic, but the language of his campaign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has been crafted to come as close to it as possible. Ferrer draws an emphatic—and repeated—distinction between belief and experience. "For me, as a kid who grew up in a building that didn't have heat and hot water, I understand what decent affordable housing is in a very visceral way," he told me one day over lunch at a Manhattan deli, where he ordered a cream soda and chicken salad on rye. "I cannot only speak *to* this issue, I can speak *for* people."

At another point in the same conversation, Ferrer said that he had acquired his views on policing "not from a book, or from a briefing, or from a poll. I got it because that's the kind of life I led." He also said, "Guys I played stickball with on Fox Street, some of us did our postgraduate work in the city, some of us did our postgraduate work at Attica or Dannemora"—prisons in upstate New York. "So I look at this in a very different way. You don't learn about these issues—or, at least, I didn't—from a graduate seminar." The same essentialist formulas were reiterated to me by Ferrer's two spokesmen, even though they are Italian-American.

When it comes to actual ideology, it turns out to be much harder to distinguish between Ferrer and his rivals. Anywhere in suburban America, all four would be considered liberals, although in New York, with the possible exception of Mark Green, they could pass as moderates. They all talk about the need, in the post-Giuliani era, to open up City Hall, to improve public education, and to celebrate the city's diversity. To the extent that they disagree on matters of policy, it is largely a matter of emphasis: does New York need to mend police-community relations while still continuing to reduce crime, or does it need to continue to reduce crime while mending police-community relations?

In terms of experience, Ferrer's only distinctions are disadvantages. His rivals have all run in either citywide or statewide elections, or both. They currently occupy more consequential, or at least more consequential-sounding, posts. Ferrer sometimes says that as Borough President he has "presided" over the Bronx's revival, and he probably deserves credit for at least some of the sixty-four thousand new units of housing that have been built there over the past decade. But, even so, the state of the borough today is not likely to impress the residents of Manhattan or Brooklyn or Queens. When I asked him recently to name the proudest achievement of his fourteen years' tenure, he referred me instead to a bill he had pushed through as a member of the City Council, back in 1986, which requires window guards in all apartments where young children are living.

"I speak at a commencement or a high-school graduation, and I'm looking at the faces of kids," he told me. "How many of them might not have been there but for that piece of metal across their window? You look at it in those terms—wow, that's why you're in public service."

Los Angeles elected its first black mayor, Tom Bradley, in 1973, and reëlected him four times. Detroit elected Coleman Young to five terms as mayor, Washington gave Marion Barry four terms, and Chicago gave Harold Washington two terms (he died shortly after the start of his second). Philadelphians reëlected Wilson Goode, even though, in his long battle with a black separatist organization, he had bombed some of his own constituents. Denver, a city with a far lower proportion of minority voters than New York, had a Hispanic mayor, Federico Peña, and currently has an African-American mayor, Wellington Webb.

African-Americans now make up about a quarter of New York City's voters and Hispanics another fifteen per cent. These figures increase slightly in a Democratic primary, which, in New York, is sometimes, though certainly not always, tantamount to the general election. Blacks and Hispanics together will likely make up more than forty-five per cent of Democratic primary voters in September. Between them, the two groups could all but determine the outcome of a two-way contest and could easily settle a three-way race. And yet a truly lasting, or even halfway stable, black-Hispanic coalition has yet to emerge. Except for Dinkins's single troubled term, no member of a racial minority has ever been elected to citywide office in New York.

Part of the problem may be, paradoxically, the city's extraordinary diver-

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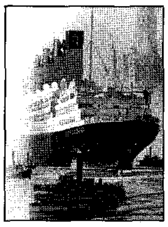
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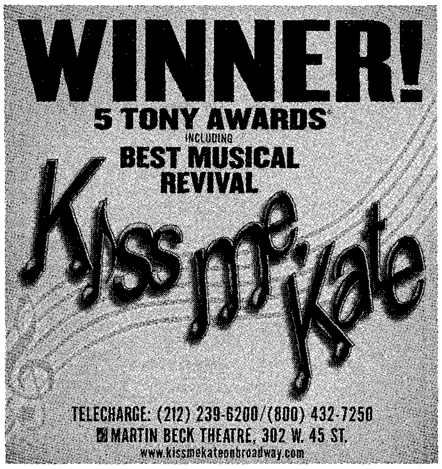
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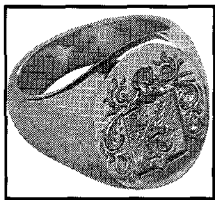
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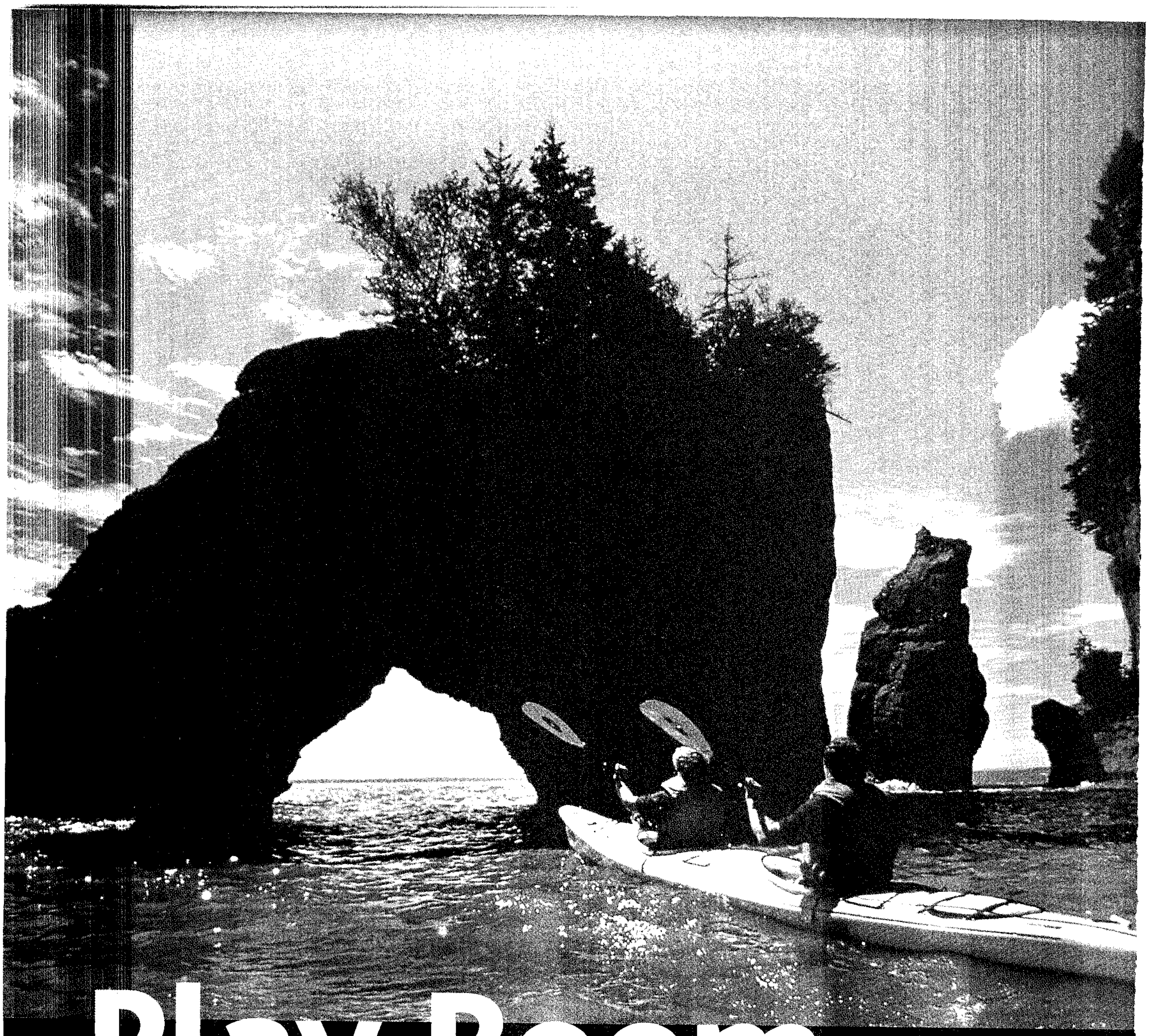

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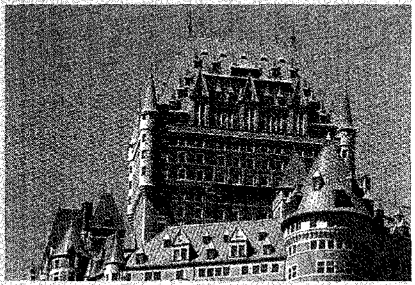

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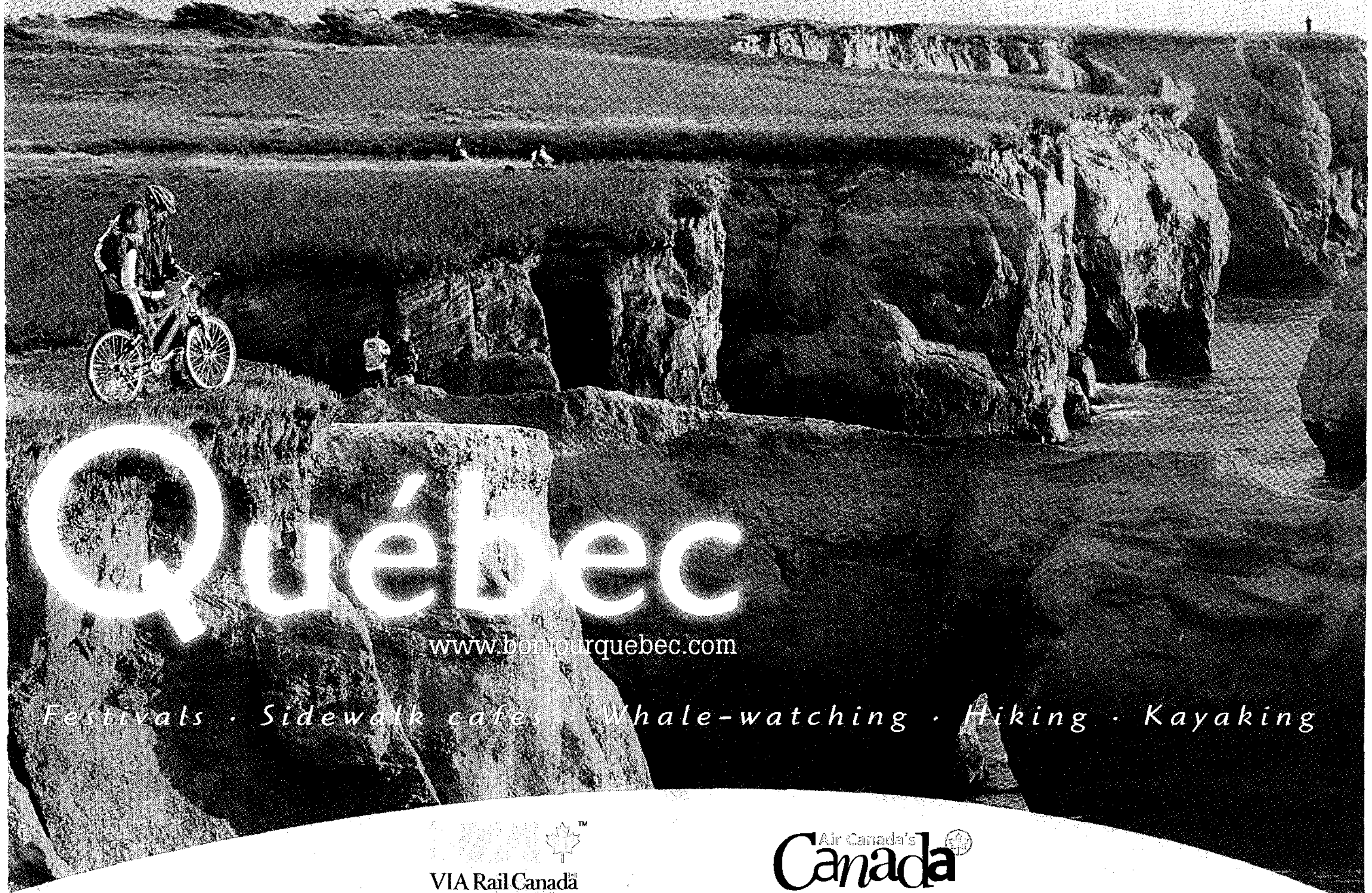
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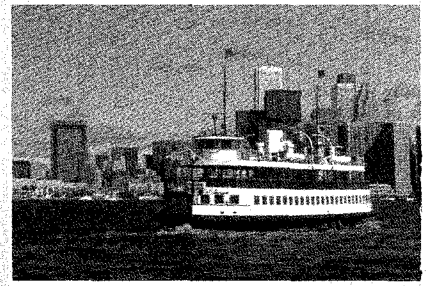

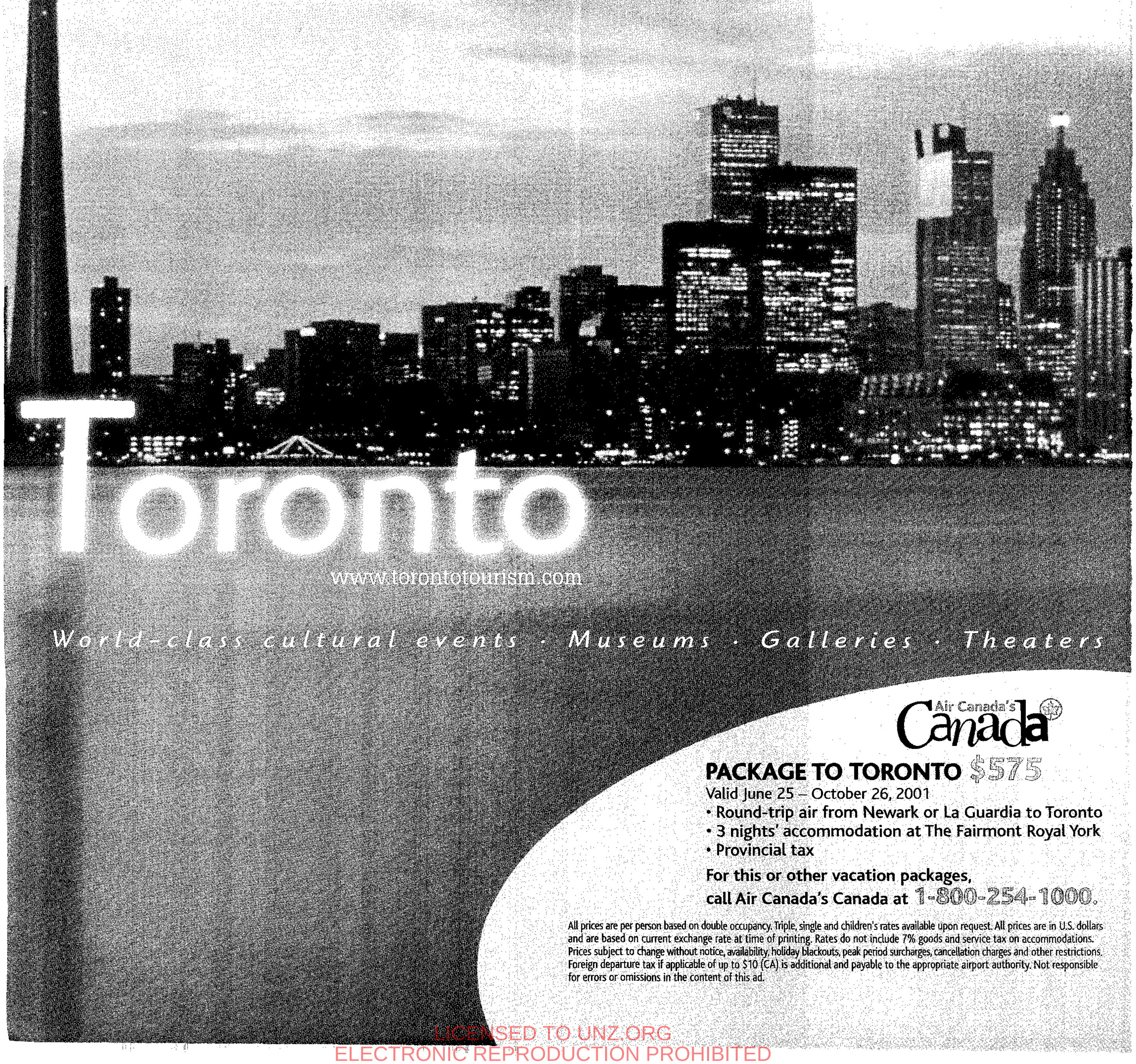

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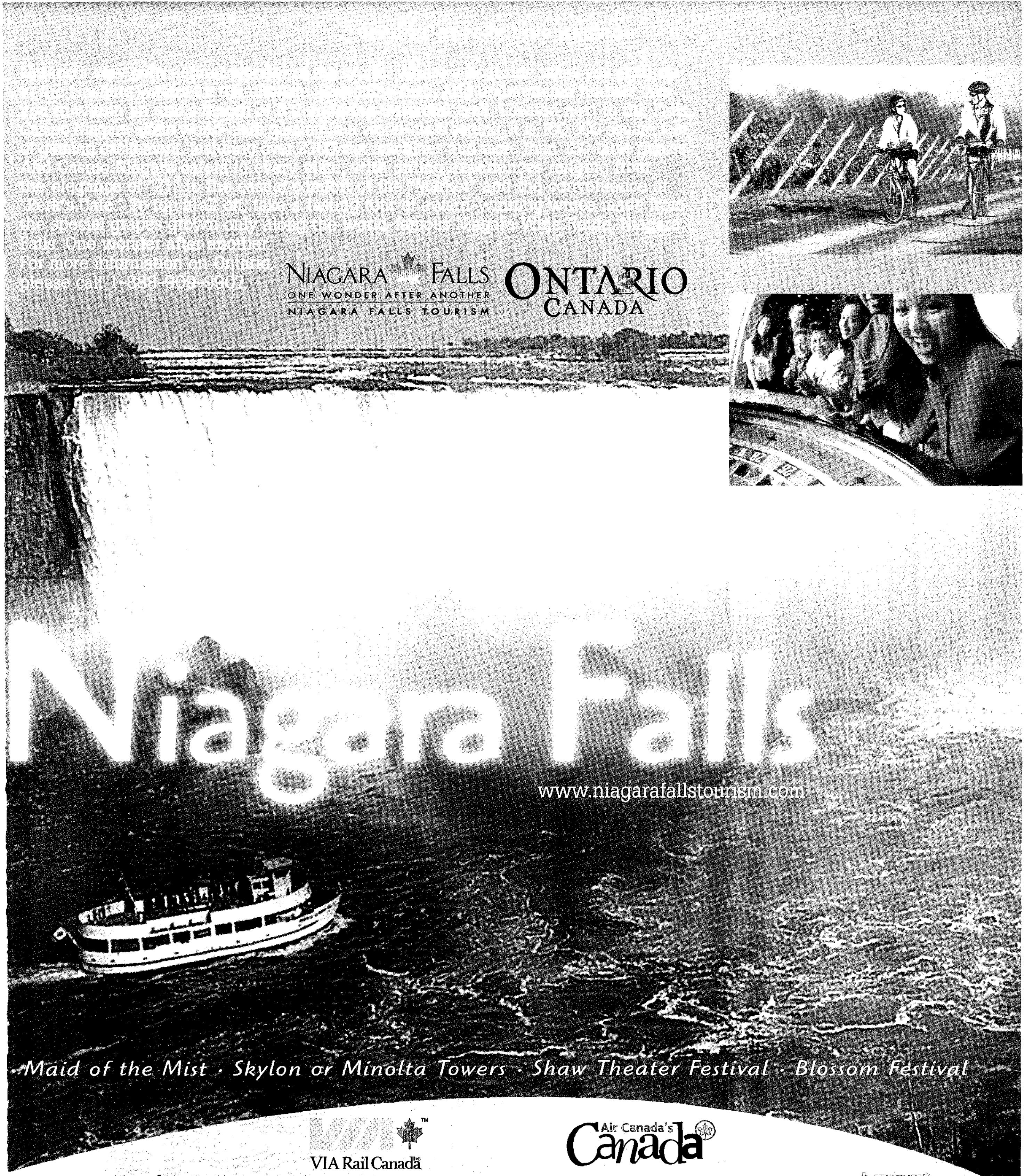
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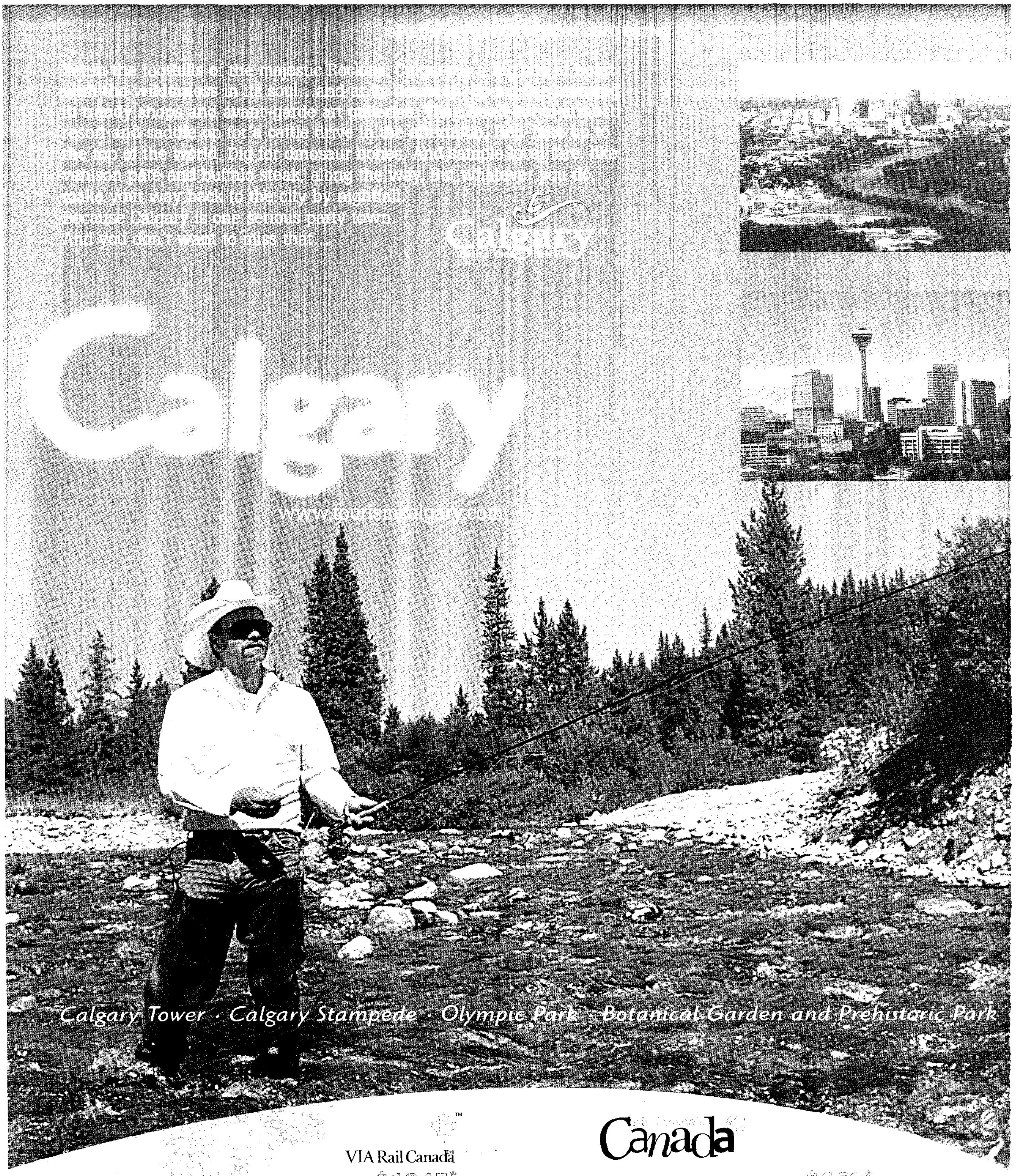

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sity. In cities like Washington and Detroit, African-Americans make up a majority of the electorate, and in Chicago blacks and whites are almost evenly balanced. But in New York blacks and whites and Hispanics—and, increasingly, Asians as well—are all vying for power. In recent years, the city has become home to so many new immigrant groups that it may no longer even be advisable to speak simply of black and Hispanic voting blocs; some local elections have been fought, quite explicitly, between native-born blacks and Caribbean blacks, and in some neighborhoods it matters a great deal whether a candidate's background is Puerto Rican or Dominican. "If there are tensions and animosities among the groups, that's just not a good environment for the development of coalitions," Paula McClain, a professor of political science at Duke University who studies interminority relations, said.

Part of the problem has also been a mysterious absence of talent, which may simply be contingent, or may be structural—a product of the city's club-driven and peculiarly inbred brand of politics. Certainly it is striking that the city's most prominent African-American leaders are still men like Dinkins and Congressman Charles Rangel, who by now are in their seventies. Even the most highly placed members of the next generation, like Manhattan Borough President Virginia Fields and Queens Congressman Greg Meeks, are little known beyond their home counties, and among all the city's black elected officials there was not a single one who seemed an obvious mayoral candidate this election cycle.

In presuming to step into this gap, Ferrer presents an awkward choice. Many black officials view him, understandably, with skepticism, but they also seem reluctant to watch him fail. Rangel has been publicly critical of Ferrer—"In my heart, I wish I could see some beef in Freddy, but I haven't seen it so far," he told the *News* last month—yet nevertheless may well end up supporting him. When I asked Rangel recently what he was looking for in a candidate, he told me bluntly, but also noncommittally, "A winner."

The biggest boost to, and happiest moment in, Ferrer's campaign so far came a couple of weeks ago, when he was endorsed by the State Comptroller, Carl McCall. The endorsement took place in front of City Hall, and, in case anyone missed its symbolic significance, Ferrer's campaign staff had arranged a multiracial tableau: thirty of his supporters, mostly black and brown, formed a backdrop on the steps. McCall, the only African-American ever elected to statewide office in New York, praised Ferrer as a man who would "open up City Hall to all of the people," and he said that he was making the endorsement because he had decided that "Freddy Ferrer will be the kind of mayor who will bring this city back together." (McCall is himself planning to run for governor next year, and his endorsement of Ferrer was widely interpreted as an attempt to lock up the Hispanic vote for the fall of 2002.) Roberto Ramirez, who recently gave up his seat in the state legislature to work on Ferrer's campaign, could barely contain his elation. "Do you believe in magic?" he asked me. "There's magic in the air!"

Ferrer himself seemed as excited about the endorsement as he is capable of getting. When it was his turn at the microphone, he thanked McCall and then spoke, once again, about the importance of firsthand experience. "There is much to do in this city regarding those 1.1 million schoolchildren—overwhelmingly black and Hispanic, poor and working class—not as someone else's children but, if I become mayor, as my children," he said.

The headquarters of Al Sharpton's civil-rights organization, the National Action Network, occupy the second floor of a once grand but now rather dreary building on Madison Avenue off 125th Street. A few weeks ago, I went to the headquarters to talk to Sharpton, and found him in an office that had recently been redone for him, executive style, with an L-shaped desk and a set of matching cabinets. While he spoke to me, Sharpton was trying to arrange a visit for a friend of his with Fidel Castro, but was having trouble getting a phone call through to Cuba. He was, characteristically, in an expansive mood.

Part of Sharpton's charm, which is difficult to resist no matter what one

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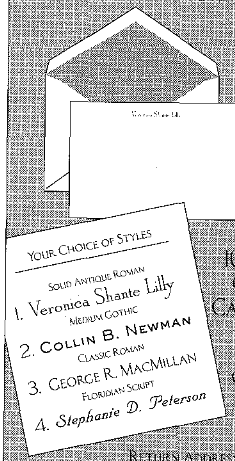
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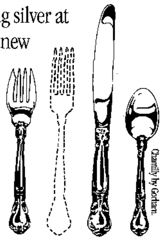
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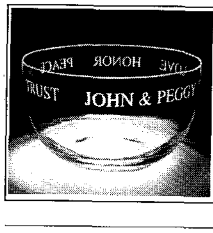

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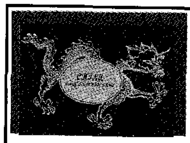
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might think of him, is that he takes so much pleasure in his own outrageousness: he seems never to have outgrown an adolescent's sense that annoying people in positions of responsibility is fun. Sharpton told me that he was having dinner that night with Clarence Norman, the chairman of Brooklyn's Democratic committee, who is backing Alan Hevesi, and he said that he had also had discussions with Rangel and with Michael Bloomberg, the media magnate, who seems to be preparing to run for mayor as a Republican. "I'm being courted by every candidate," he told me, with evident glee.

Sharpton's publicly stated position is that he is still considering entering the mayoral race himself. If he were to do so, Ferrer's chances would evaporate. It is hard to imagine that this would trouble Sharpton. The two men were, briefly, opponents in 1997, and then, after dropping out of that race, Ferrer made not even a perfunctory show of considering an endorsement of Sharpton. Instead, being a good party man—and a responsible public official—he immediately threw his support behind Ruth Messinger.

"When Freddy and Roberto Ramirez sit with me and say, 'Sharpton, we're the *only minorities* in the race,' *you* know what my answer is?" Sharpton told me. " 'I was the only minority in 1997, when you endorsed Ruth Messinger. When did you make that rule? After I ran?' "

Although Sharpton remains anathema to many white voters, he is perceived, perhaps accurately, as the key to a significant—and otherwise difficult to energize—African-American constituency. Last summer, Ramirez, as head of the Bronx Democratic organization, engineered a primary campaign that was widely interpreted as an effort to win Sharpton's backing for Ferrer: the Democratic organization suddenly withdrew its support from one of the borough's congressional incumbents, Eliot Engel, who is white, and threw it behind a challenger, State Senator Larry Seabrook, who is black. A lot of politicians in New York were bewildered by this move, not so much because of its cynicism as because of its oafishness. Seabrook was a dubious ally; he had one of the worst attendance records in the legislature and, it was revealed a couple of weeks before the primary, had divorced his wife several years earlier without bothering to inform many relevant people, including officials of the I.R.S.

Sharpton has offered several different accounts of the Seabrook incident, which ended, unfortunately for Ramirez, in Engel's reëlection. When I asked Sharpton about it, he told me that he and Ramirez had never had a deal, per se, and that, in any event, the other side hadn't lived up to its end of the arrangement. "A lot of people said there was a quid pro quo between me and Roberto," he told me. "The problem is, as I said to Roberto right after that, 'You supported Larry—Freddy didn't. You're not running for mayor.' So he said, 'Yeah, but Freddy remained neutral.' I said, 'Good, then I'll remain neutral.' "

Sharpton hinted strongly to me that he would not be entering the race, and even his willingness to criticize Ferrer suggested to me that he would probably back him in the end—though not before causing him additional grief. Sharpton was, in fact, explicit in saying that he expected Ferrer to make further concessions to him, including, perhaps, providing endorsements for various City Council candidates he favors. "Why would I just say, 'O.K., Freddy, you're the *only minority,* I don't want nothing, I'm going to support you'?" he asked me. "That would really be politically stupid. And I've been accused of many things—stupid ain't one of them."

Given his commitment to improving minority representation, I said, wouldn't it only make sense for him to support Ferrer?

"One would have to say from a logical standpoint that's right," he conceded. But then he added, "Freddy's problem is he has done things to cause problems, such as he has taken some conservative views, like pro death penalty. Freddy has not been particularly involved in activism in this city."

One day, I asked Ferrer directly how he proposed to win the mayoral primary. "Everybody has a theory to win it," he told me with typical acerbity. "And if everybody's theory was completely accurate the universe would be, instead of one hundred per cent, two hundred and ninety per cent. So obviously only one of these theories works."

What Ferrer's candidacy means will depend, of course, on whose, if anybody's, theory actually does work in the fall, and there are many possible outcomes. Blacks could back Ferrer, or they could not. He could win the primary on the first round, or he could not; he could get into a runoff, or not; and he could face a strong opponent in the general election, or not. But the larger significance of his candidacy can't be disentangled from who Ferrer is, and right now this seems likely to make a muddle of just about any result.

At the end of last month, the 125th Street branch of the Banco Popular hosted a reception in honor of Congressman Rangel, to which Ferrer was invited. He was scheduled to get to the reception at seven-fifteen and to offer Rangel his congratulations. But at the last minute the Congressman decided to move up his schedule so that he could get to the Apollo Theatre, where Bill Clinton was attending a benefit performance. The result was that even though Ferrer got to the bank a few minutes early, Rangel was already leaving, and the guests were gathered around the buffet table.

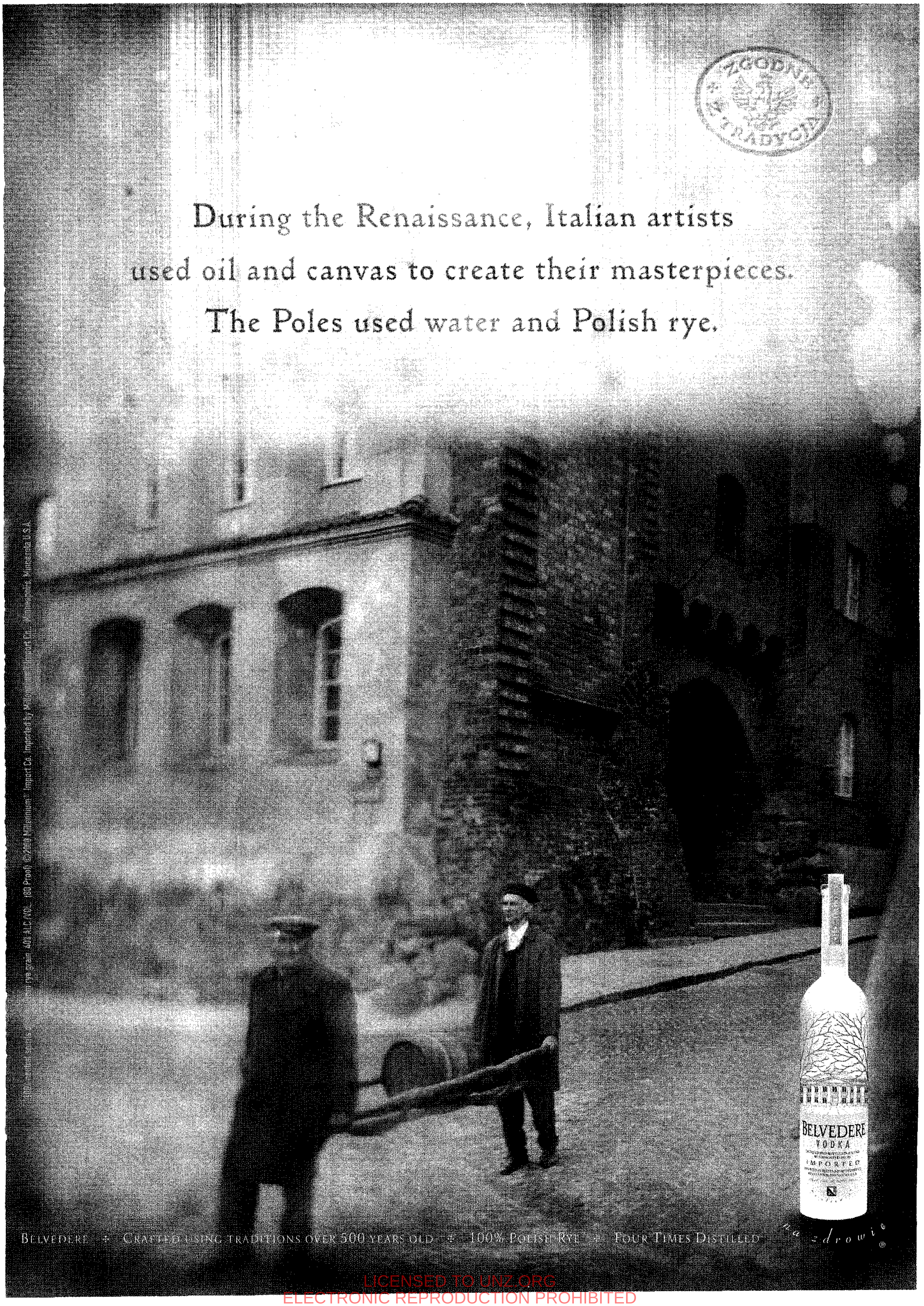
Ferrer stayed at the reception for another half hour, but instead of working the room he spent most of his time standing around at a counter that held deposit slips. Later, he walked over to the Apollo, and although his aides kept urging him to go schmooze with Clinton and Rangel, Ferrer hung back. Finally, as the lights were dimming, he went over to the former President, who joked that maybe he should have rented office space in the Bronx. ♦

CORRECTION OF THE WEEK
From the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Stormy weather: Let's try this again: Last Saturday an editorial about the relocation of rattlesnakes at Carlyle Lake referred to Charles "Stormy" Bidwill III as the brother of Bill Bidwill, the owner of the Arizona, nee St. Louis, Cardinals of the National Football League.

This was incorrect. So was the correction we ran in Wednesday's paper, in which we identified Charles "Stormy" Bidwill III as Bill Bidwill's nephew. Charles III is, in fact, Bill's nephew, but he is not nicknamed "Stormy." Charles III is the son of Charles "Stormy" Bidwill, Jr., who is the brother of Bill Bidwill, and both were sons of Charles W. Bidwill, Sr., a.k.a., "Charlie Blue Shirt," of Chicago, and his wife, Violet Bidwill.

None of three Charles Bidwills bears any blame for drafting Clyde Duncan.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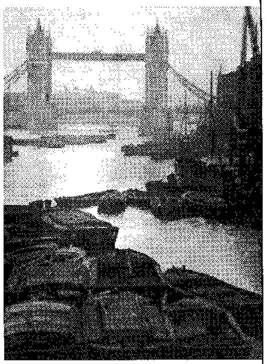

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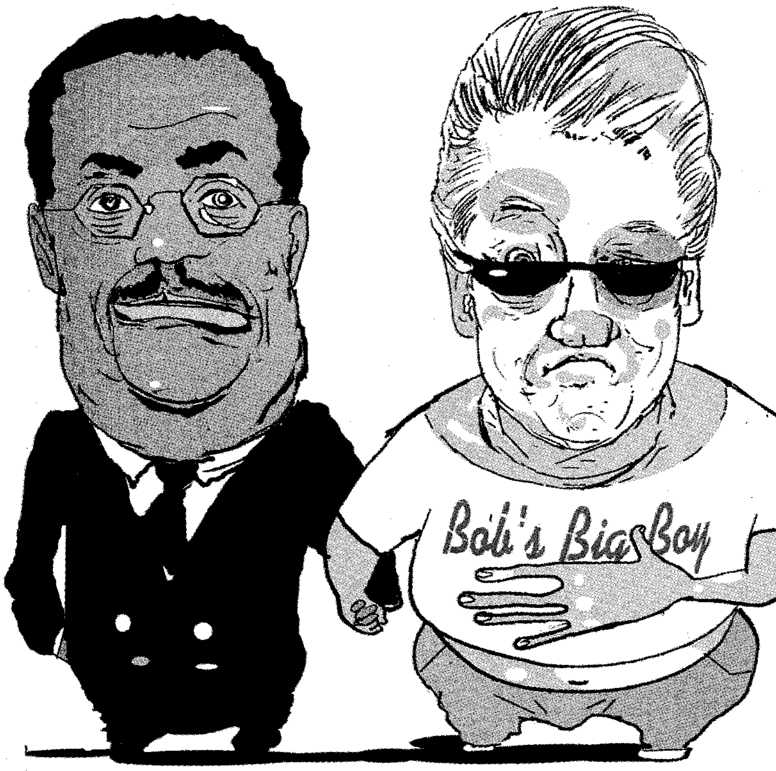
MORE CLINTON SCANDALS

BY MARK SINGER

Police have identified the suspect in a string of robberies that have plagued residents of upper Manhattan. Aided by victims' descriptions of a gray-haired, well-dressed, heavyset white male who, in at least eight incidents since late January, followed elderly women into residential buildings in Harlem and Morningside Heights and, after threatening to talk their ears off, took cash and other valuables before fleeing in a dark limousine, New York Police Department detectives determined that the alleged perpetrator is William Jefferson Clinton, the former President of the United States and now a resident of Chappaqua, in Westchester County. Yesterday, a warrant for Mr. Clinton's arrest was issued by the Manhattan District Attorney, and he is expected to surrender sometime today, according to Johnnie Cochran, the well-known defense lawyer, who said he had been retained by the ex-Commander-in-Chief. Mr. Cochran characterized Mr. Clinton's involvement in the robberies as "a lot less bad than it might appear," adding, "My client looks forward to a full airing of his side of the story regarding each one of these misunderstandings. If the shoe fits, he'll wear it; until then, we'll just grin and bear it."

The producers of the award-winning HBO series "The Sopranos" have refused to comment publicly but are said to be "homicidally incensed" by a leak that has revealed a startling plot development in a forthcoming episode. As reported yesterday in a gossip column in the *News*, the actor James Gandolfini, who portrays the lead character, Tony Soprano, the underboss of a New Jersey organized-crime family, has apparently been replaced by former President Bill Clinton. Johnnie Cochran, the attorney who has been representing Mr. Clinton in several pending matters, has acknowledged arranging a meeting at the White House



last October between the then President and David Chase, the series' creator. At the time, it was agreed that Mr. Clinton would make a cameo appearance, playing himself in two brief scenes in which he and Tony Soprano meet for a golf date arranged by a mutual acquaintance (who is actually an F.B.I. undercover operative). What remains unclear is precisely how Mr. Clinton, who has a history of close ties to the entertainment industry, succeeded in leveraging that minor on-camera performance into the backstage coup that resulted in the departure of Mr. Gandolfini, who won an Emmy award last year for best actor. Mr. Cochran dismissed as "nasty speculation" suggestions that Mr. Clinton might have misappropriated wiretap transcripts and other information gathered by federal organized-crime investigators in his successful effort to usurp Mr. Gandolfini, who is rumored to have exchanged his role on the television program for a role in a witness-protection program.

Amid calls for a formal Parliamentary inquiry into the alarming outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Britain, government officials there are pursuing a theory of how the epidemic began which, if correct, would seem to implicate Bill Clinton. The investigation is focussing on a shipment early last month of twenty pigs sent, evidently at Mr. Clinton's direction, to Prime Minister Tony Blair, and arranged by Tyson Foods, the giant livestock-processing company, which has headquarters in Arkansas, the former President's home state. During a vigorous and heated question-and-answer session yesterday on the floor of the House of Commons, Mr. Blair acknowledged having received the pigs from Mr. Clinton to settle a "friendly" bet made last fall, when the outcome of the U.S. Presidential election was still the subject of a court battle in Florida. "President Clinton predicted that the American election crisis would be resolved with him serving another four years in the White House," Mr. Blair said. "I wagered a flock of Shetland sheep against that notion, and he put up the swine. And I seem to have won, though I suppose one might say that a rather different outcome would have been preferable." Mr. Blair added that he never expected Mr. Clinton to deliver the pigs and that, upon being notified that they had arrived in Britain, he hastily arranged for

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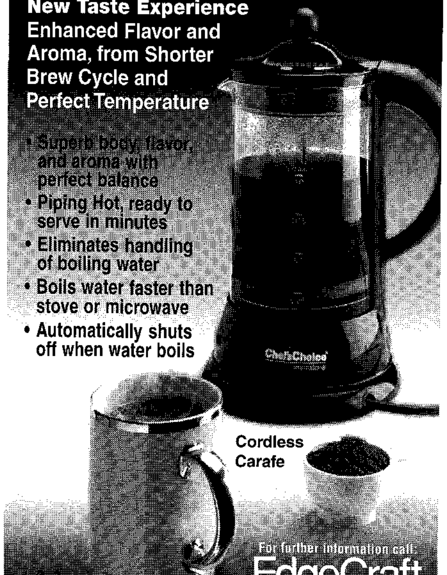

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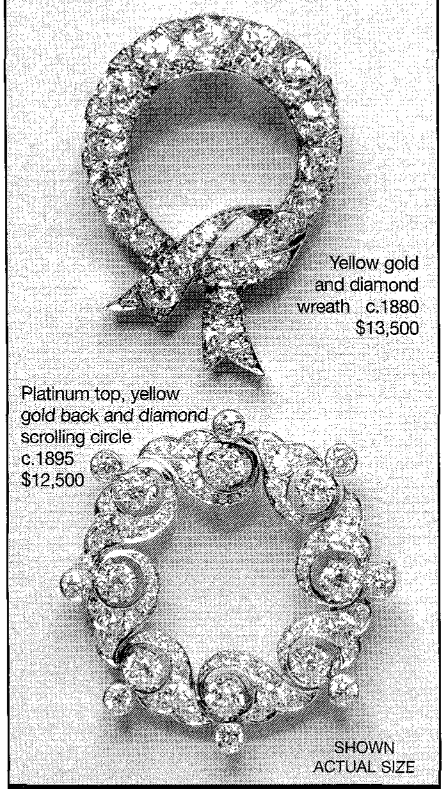

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them to be diverted to an acquaintance in Heddon-on-the-Wall, the rural northern village where, two weeks ago, the eruption of foot-and-mouth disease was first reported. Mr. Clinton was unavailable for comment yesterday, and telephone callers to the office of his attorney, Johnnie Cochran, were greeted by a recorded message that said, "Never mind the pigs. We've stepped out for a mess of ribs."

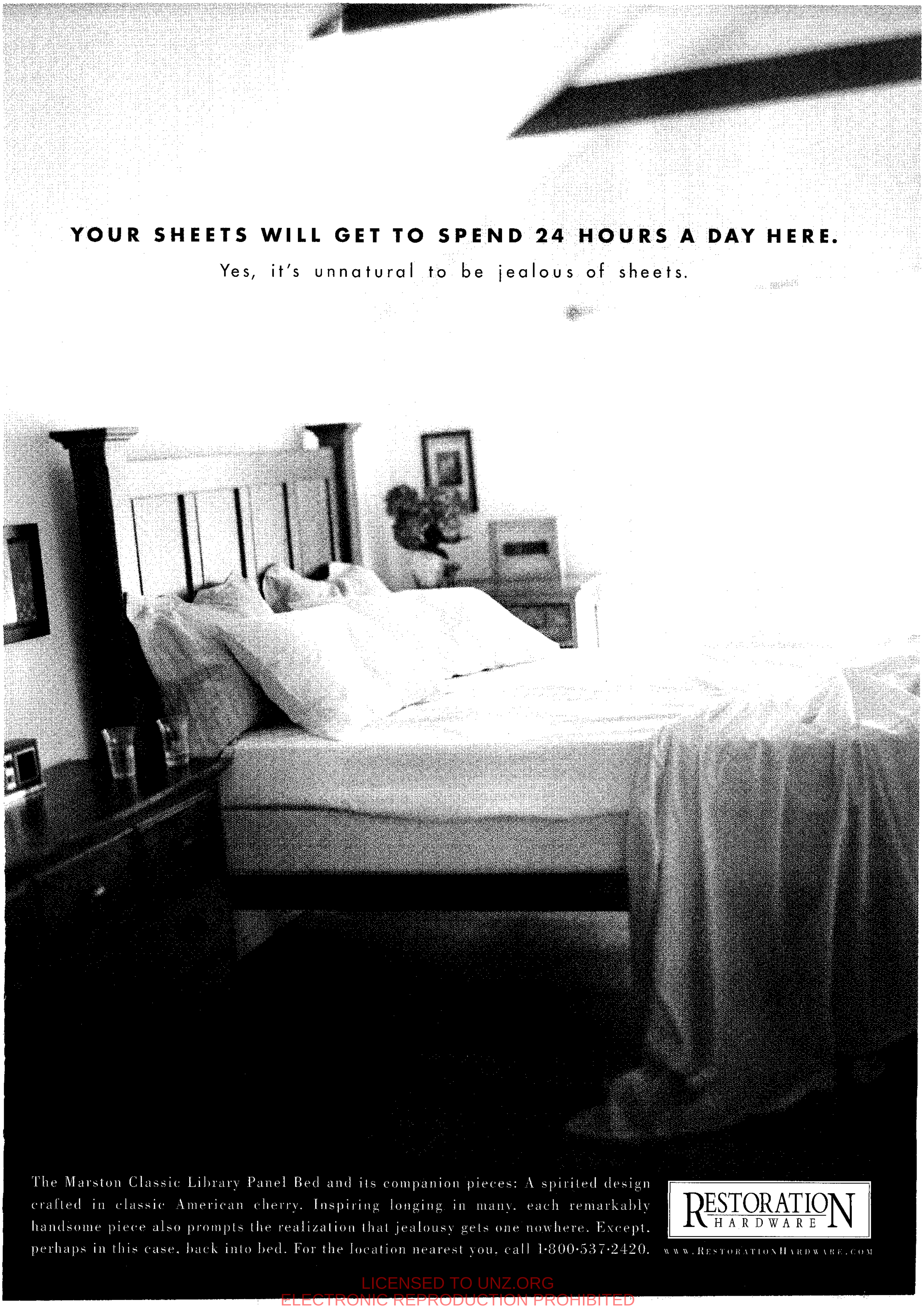
The entire admissions staff of a private school on the Upper East Side of Manhattan has been suspended without pay by that institution's trustees after the discovery of a purported scheme in which Bill Clinton is said to have influenced the selection of next fall's kindergarten class. According to a spokesman for the prestigious Dalton School, on East Eighty-ninth Street, "certain irregularities came to light" after reporters for the New York *Observer*, a weekly newspaper, obtained copies of internal school files and compared the results of admissions-committee deliberations with lists of prominent donors to the election campaign of U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham, the former President's estranged wife. During an impromptu press briefing yesterday outside the Senate chamber, in Washington, Rodham stated, "I know nothing about any of this, but I can assure you that there was no quid here, no pro, and precious little quo." Rodham described herself as "disappointed, surprised, and hurt" by reporters' suggestions that she might have been aware of phone calls that Mr. Clinton is said to have made to Dalton admissions officers, urging them to "be nice" to certain applicants, whose names have been withheld because of their status as five- or soon-to-be five-year-olds.

Scientists attending the annual Multi-lateral International Hole-in-the-Ozone Monitoring Symposium, in Val-d'Isère, France, will issue a joint resolution later this week condemning former President Bill Clinton. Several research papers are scheduled to be presented during the conference, and excerpts from advance copies that have been made available to journalists delineate a statistical correlation between Mr. Clinton's liberal use of hair spray and fossil-fuel-powered jet aircraft during his term in office and the general problem of "global warming," which has resulted in increased levels of perspiration worldwide. Former Vice-President Al Gore, one of the conference attendees, declared that he was "deeply, deeply concerned about certain inferences made by these remarkably impressive scientists." Reached in New York, Mr. Clinton's attorney and confidant, Johnnie Cochran, scoffed at the scientific findings, calling them "piling on and, in general, a pile."

"That hole in the ozone they keep talking about is down around Antarctica, right?" Mr. Cochran said. "O.K., I say show me some credit-card receipts. Show me some plane-ticket stubs. Show me any kind of evidence that the man has been anywhere near Antarctica."

Associates of former President Bill Clinton confirmed today that he has launched "an open-ended personal goodwill tour" of several foreign capitals, to meet with leaders with whom he has had sharp differences in the past. On the first leg of this journey, he spent yesterday in Cuba with that country's longtime dictator, Fidel Castro. Speaking last night from Havana, Johnnie Cochran, Mr. Clinton's attorney and senior adviser, described the tenor of discussions between his client and Mr. Castro as "real down-home." Though many details of Mr. Clinton's itinerary are not yet clear, Mr. Cochran said that Mr. Castro would be accompanying them to their next stop, Libya, where they will meet with Colonel Muammar Qaddafi. "And if things go the way we think they will with Qaddafi," Mr. Cochran anticipated, "there's no reason we can't all chill together when we head on over to Iraq"—where Mr. Clinton would presumably confer with that country's strongman, Saddam Hussein. Asked about reports that former Ugandan President-for-Life Idi Amin, deposed Panamanian leader Manuel Noriega, and recently extradited Chilean ex-President Augusto Pinochet would also become part of the Clinton entourage, Mr. Cochran paused, then said, "How about 'No comment'?"

Meanwhile, White House officials have questioned not only the propriety of Mr. Clinton's trip but also its timing. Last week, Acting President George W. Bush filed a civil-rights suit against Mr. Clinton, alleging a conspiracy by him and Mr. Cochran to monopolize media coverage in a manner that abridges Mr. Bush's freedom of expression, as guaranteed by the First Amendment. ♦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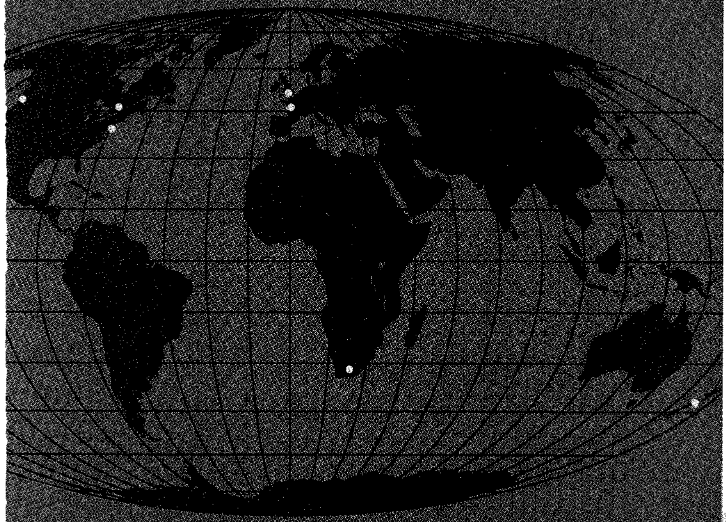
the chic set

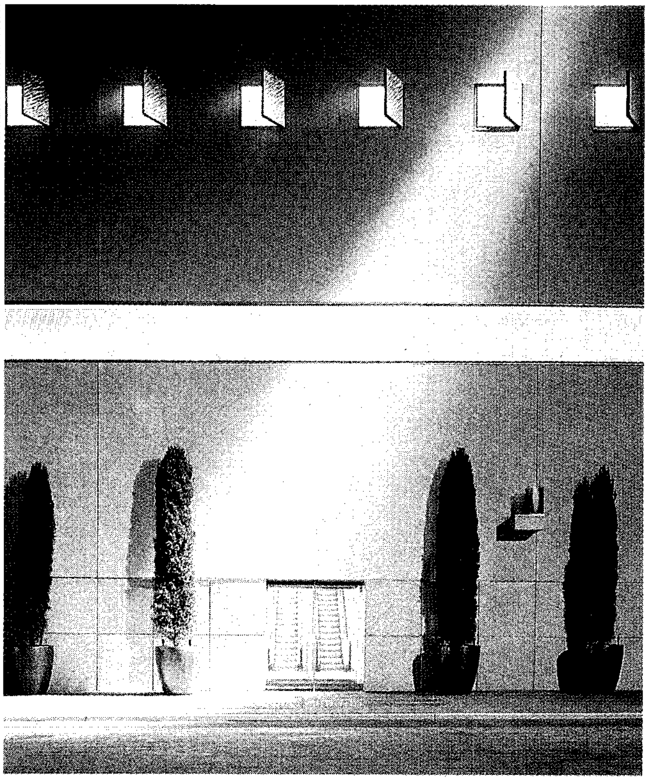
BY ASHLEY STARR

"You are where you sleep," asserts Ian Schrager. "Because where you sleep says to the world, 'this is who I am.'" Whether or not you agree with the renowned hotelier, there's no debating how important interior design has become in our lives, even when we're on the road. The successful boutique hotels of visionary entrepreneurs worldwide are testimony to his proclamation. A-list hotels and restaurants are currently engendering a whole new zeitgeist.

Today's traveller can't help but take note not only of the sudden proliferation of chic, high-wattage hotels and restaurants, but of the architecturally brilliant new museums and the sleek new boutiques that could—and sometimes do—double as art galleries. And there's much more than that which meets the eye: Fashion may fade, but true style endures.

A-list hotels, restaurants, and boutiques are engendering a whole new zeitgeist.





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IS PARIS BURNING?

French design icons Philippe Starck, Christian Liaigre, and Jacques Garcia have been heating things up in Paris, exerting an influence over their fervent followers comparable to that of legendary Sun King and Versailles "decorator" Louis XIV.

Haute stylemeister Jacques Garcia's extravagant Second Empire décor and the magnetism of the irrepressible Costes brothers have made the **Hotel Costes** the hottest hostelry in town. On any given day, a visitor might spy Paloma Picasso being interviewed on a Napoléon III red-and-gold velvet sofa, Mick Jagger wending his way to a secluded table in the restaurant, or a squadron of fashion models parading through the Italianate courtyard amid the ringing of cell phones.

Garcia has also lent his Midas touch to the opulent new décor of **L'Hôtel**. When Oscar Wilde died a hundred years ago on November 29th, he had been living "beyond his means" in Room 16. Ironically, his demise endowed the small Left Bank hotel with permanent panache. Now, the twenty Garcia-ized rooms that encircle a rotunda boast everything from gilded murals in Oscar's former quarters to mirrored Art Deco and Oriental themes. Fabrics of emerald velvet and sea-green taffeta, in a room now renamed St. Petersbourg, resurrect the Imperial Russian mood so popular at the turn of the nineteenth century.

The cool chic of Christian Liaigre's highly polished Zen furnishings and cream-colored fabrics was first showcased at the **Hotel Montalembert** in 1989. With rooms that are variously Liaigre modern and Louis Philippe classic, the hotel is still a favorite of the Parisian literati, who throng the bar and restaurant. Fashionistas and designers abound as well. (It's Sir Terence Conran's favorite Parisian hangout.)

Montalembert manager Grace Leo Andrieu has adopted a spare Europe-meets-Asia look for the revamped **Hotel Bel-Ami**, located in the heart of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Its streamlined dark woods and earth tones are the inspiration of design duo Véronique Terreaux and Nathalie Battesti, who trained with Andrée Putman and Liaigre.

Checking out the happening Paris restaurant scene might be called "keeping up with the Costes." The fabled brothers have an unerring knack for luring the young and the restless to their coterie of restaurants with top-notch décor and great food (crispy duck, crab and mushroom *millefeuille* or puff pastry, gooey chocolate cake). Their impressive lineup includes **Café Marly**, which has to be entered from the peristyle in the Louvre's Cour Napoléon, and boasts striking views of the museum's courtyards. The restaurant's glamorous interiors, with plush seating and a huge red, white, and blue Murano chandelier by Olivier Gagnère, evoke the aura of a grand Venetian café. On the roof of the renovated Centre Pompidou, **Georges**, designed by architects Dominique Jakob and Brendan MacFarlane, is a soaring contemporary space with frosted glass tables and futuristic metallic dining igloos. Windows open on to spectacular city panoramas

(continued)

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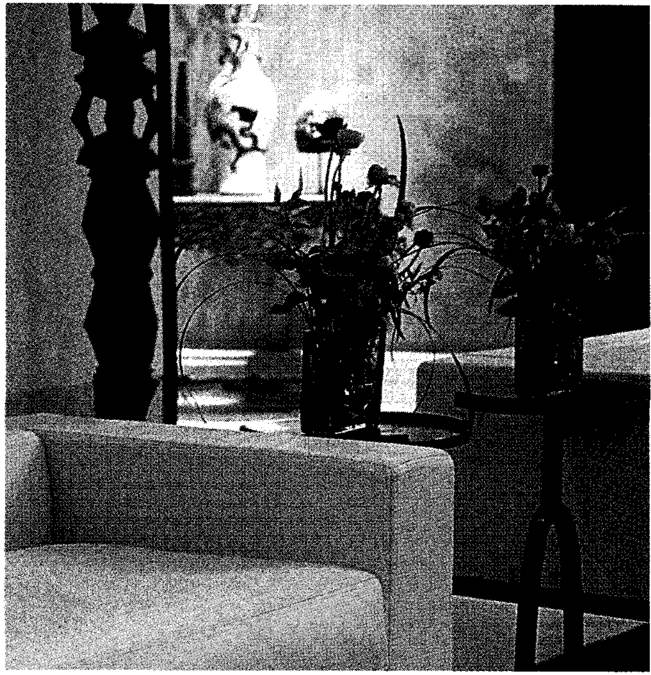
Le Barrio Latino. 46-48 rue du Faubourg St. Antoine, 75012. Tel. 33.1.55.78.84.75.
Tanjia. 23 rue Ponthieu, 75008. Tel. 33.1.42.45.95.00.
Lô Sushi. 8 rue de Berri, 75008. Tel. 33.1.45.62.01.00.



courtesy of the Hotel Montalembert

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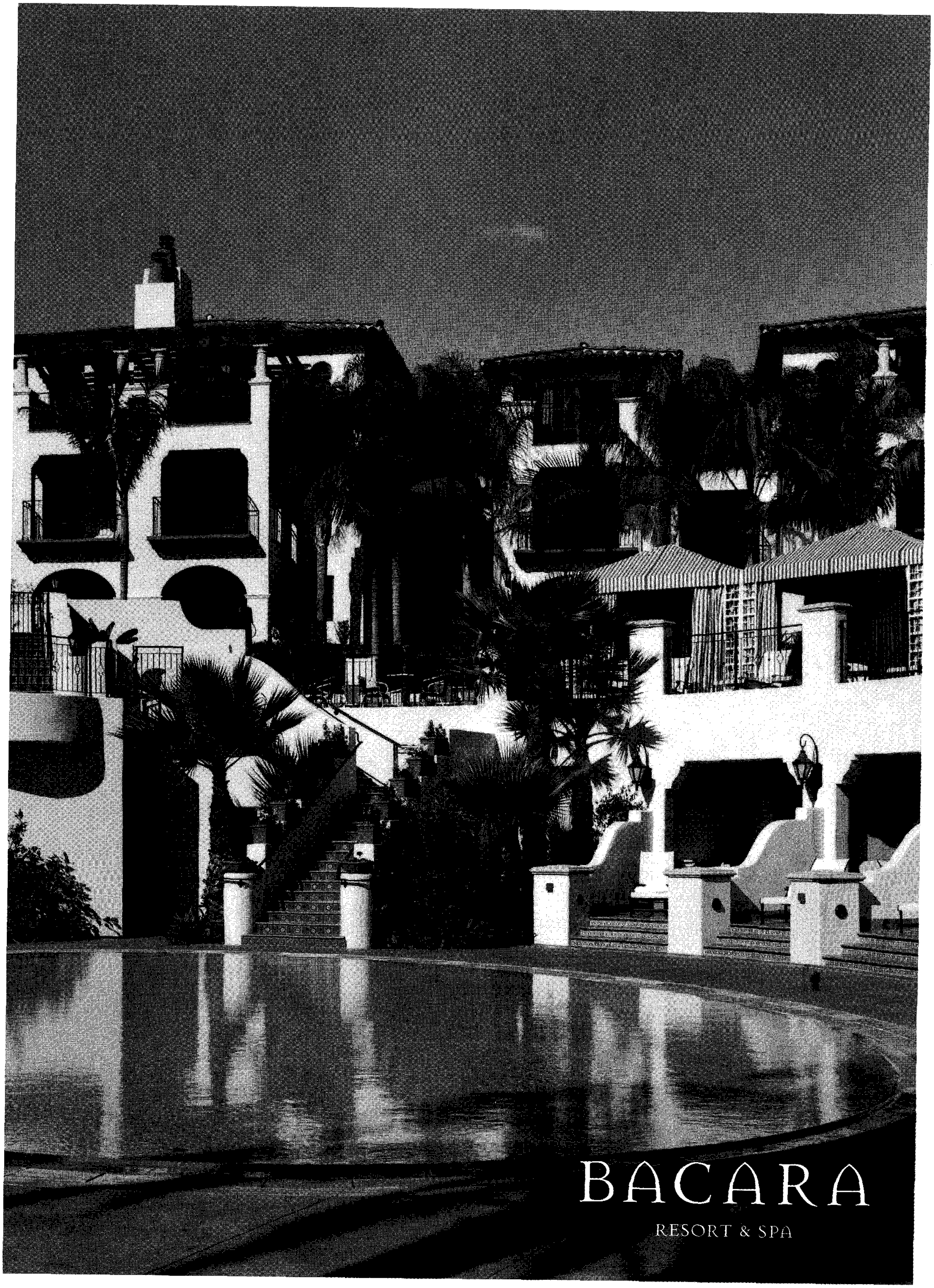

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(IS PARIS BURNING? continued)

including the Eiffel Tower's nightly millennium light show.

Other not-to-be-missed beacons of style include Philippe Starck's organic restaurant, **Bon**, where Starckian style holds sway over 7,500 square feet of space. Some say the ravishing décor—which features satin walls, silver candelabra, and glittering metal and marble *table d'hôte*—outranks the food. (Wags claim it should be called Beau, not Bon.) Head for the room with pillow-strewn sofas and celebrity-filled booths. **Korova** is the latest hit with *tout* Paris, jammed from noon to 2 A.M. Backed by TV personality Jean Luc Delerve and Hubert Boukobze, owner of the legendary Bains nightclub, its modern décor by young French designer Christian Biecher features Murano lighting, leather seating, and a totem-like aquarium teeming with exotic blue fish. (On the menu is an amazingly delicious roast chicken with Coca-Cola sauce. There's also a trio of seafood ceviches, mouth-watering *millefeuilles*, and macaroons.)

Even the establishment is moving fast-forward into the twenty-first century. Multi-Michelin-starred chef Alain Ducasse asked former Starck acolyte Patrick Jouin to add a modern metallic accent to the gilded Régence décor of his new three-star **Restaurant Plaza Athénée**. In Ducasse's other gourmet venue, the rebaptized **59 Poincaré**, Jouin's contemporized décor of white-leather barstools and marble tables is matched by fusion fare based on lamb, lobster, fruits, and vegetables.

While fusion is the fashion, a beatific note is struck by the **Buddha Bar**, where exotic cocktails are sipped in the presence of a giant, gilded Buddha. The beat goes on with the Cuban **Le Barrio Latino** in an eighteenth-century building built by Eiffel Tower designer Gustave Eiffel. Baroque sofas and a spiralling ironwork staircase provide a theatrical backdrop for its obsessively trendy clientele (one floor is reserved for VIPs only). At sunset-colored **Tanjia**, the jet set has found a new Moroccan refuge with bio-couscous on the menu. Patrons have cocktails and appetizers while languishing on Moroccan divans. Then there's Japanese minimalism à la Française by design diva Andrée Putnam who has made **Lô Sushi** the hot spot for a fashionable snack or après-movie supper.

STYLE FOR SALE

Artelano. 54 rue Bourgogne, 75007. Tel. 33.1.44.18.00.00. Furniture designs from Olivier Gagnère, Pascal Mourgue, Christophe Pillet.
Bô. 8 rue Saint Merri, 75004. Tel. 33.1.42.72.84.64. Minimalist design boutique in Marais with everything for the home from lighting to furniture, decorative objects, and botanical bath products.
Christian Liaigre. 42 rue du Bac, 75007. Tel. 33.1.56.63.33.66. The haute designer's latest shop full of his own furniture designs.
Colette. 213 rue St-Honoré, 75001. Tel. 33.1.55.35.33.90. Still the coolest concept emporium in town. From Kiehl's and Bumble and Bumble to Prada and Jimmy Choo.
Résonances. Village Bercy, 9 cour St. Emilion, 75012. Tel. 33.1.44.73.82.82. Contemporary hardware store selling everything from patina wax and furniture to nap cushions and porcelain door knobs.
Sentou Galerie. 26 Blvd. Raspail, 75007. Tel. 33.1.45.49.00.05. Up-and-coming furniture and tableware designs.
(Look out for **Cappellini's** first 8,600-square-foot Paris furniture store to open in the Marais district next week.)

Benno Pre
NL Architects

courtesy of Sentou Galerie

SENTOU GALERIE

The two-hundred-square-meter Left Bank location is showcasing the works of Isamu Noguchi and Robert Le Heros, among others. (Another gallery location is due to open in Paris next month.)

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Roger Oates Design. 1 Munro Terrace. Tel. 44.207.351.2288. Simple, sophisticated floor coverings. Bold and subtle stripes juxtapose soft neutrals in natural fibers.

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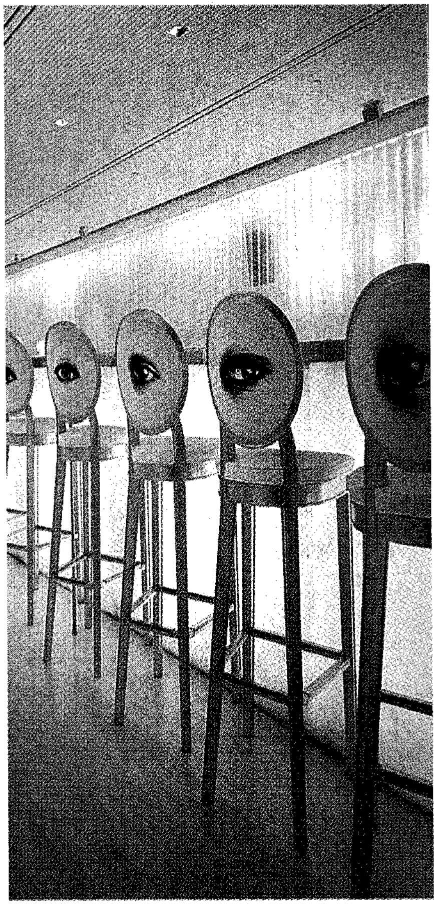
Vessel. 14 Kensington Park Road. Tel. 44.207.727.8001. Store-cum-gallery that's the authority on contemporary tableware including Murano art glass and Scandinavian designs from Swedish rising star Lena Bergstrom.

BRIT PIZAZZ

When it comes to stylish scenarios, Starck and Ian Schrager deserve an Oscar for lifetime achievement. Just being seen at one of their American hotels—Delano, Mondrian, Paramount, Royalton, and now the Hudson—bestows instant lifestyle credibilty. Starck and Schrager have struck again, this time in London. The **St Martins Lane** and **Sanderson** have exuberantly theatrical lobbies, ultra-fashionable restaurants, and manifestos of chic that have brought even phlegmatic Britons under their spell. A major draw at the St Martins Lane is its **Asia de Cuba** restaurant, with artful columns of books and photographs, and the Rum Bar where local hipsters perch on spindly barstools. Upstairs, the white-on-white guest rooms can be tinted any color of the rainbow using lighting wizard Arnold Chan's ingenious system.

The Sanderson—in a landmark sixties building—is even more stunning with a light, airy décor juxtaposed to a black granite and deep purple bar. The hotel has an ethereal star-studded elevator that makes you feel like you're flying through the night sky. Upstairs, baroque Italian silver-leaf sleigh beds, stainless steel



courtesy of the Sanderson hotel © Todd Eberle

THE SANDERSON
Light, airy interior with a long bar that keeps "a close eye" on the chic clientele its Starckian splendor continues to attract.

DIRECTORY >> LONDON

St Martins Lane. 45 St. Martin's Lane, WC2N 4HX. Tel. 44.207.300.5500.
Sanderson. 50 Berners Street, WIP 3AD. Tel. 44.207.300.1400.
Bluebird. 350 King's Road, SW3 5UU. Tel. 44.207.559.1000.
Bibendum. Michelin House, 81 Fulham Road, SW3 6RD. Tel. 44.207.581.5817.
Great Eastern Hotel. Liverpool Street, EC2M 7QN. Tel. 44.207.618.5000.
Metropolitan Hotel. 19 Old Park Lane, W1. Tel. 44.207.447.4747.
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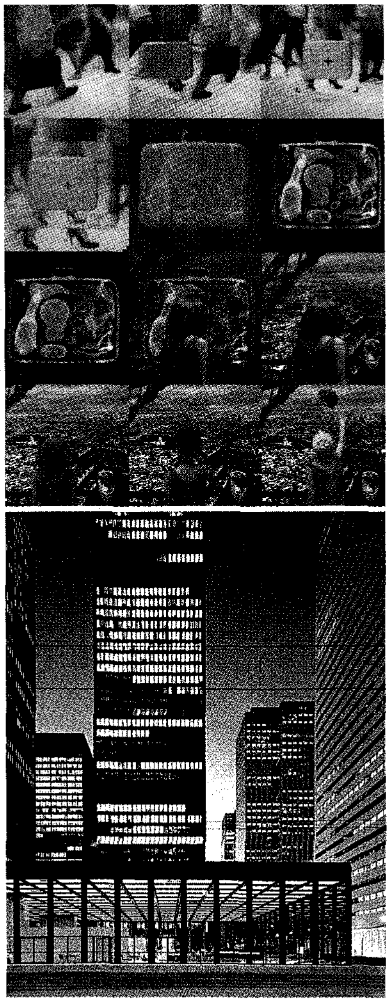
night tables, and swanhead Empire chairs maintain the excitement. Downstairs, at the London outpost of Alain Ducasse's **Spoon +**, everyone is busy congratulating themselves for just being there.

Style guru Sir Terence Conran may have invented designer dining. His empire of twenty-two restaurants and hotels in England, France, and now New York, features bright stars such as Chelsea's **Bluebird** and **Bibendum**. (Conran is also the mastermind behind New York's Guastavino's restaurant, whose cathedral-like interior tucked under the Queensboro Bridge is considered one of the city's most intriguing spaces.) The latest Conran hat trick is the **Great Eastern Hotel** with a lovingly restored red-brick façade, gables, stained-glass dome, ironwork, and alabaster staircase.

Meanwhile, at the **Metropolitan Hotel** in Mayfair, **Nobu** still reigns as the queen of minimalist chic with a menu as spare as its décor. And although the **Met Bar** is still jammed with celebrities, the freshly renovated **Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park** bar with mandarin orange walls and Madagascar ebony tables is fast becoming the new citadel of cool.

INSIDE INFORMATION

Its time has nearly come. After more than three years of construction, **JFK International's** new **Terminal 4** will be fully operational this May. The two-concourse glass building will feature one of the largest collections of art in any airport in the world. The international arrivals corridor will house an installation of thirty-three lenticular screens by renowned New York architect/design team **Diller + Scofidio**, who, two years ago, created the visually stunning new interior for the posh Brasserie in the Seagram Building. • Speaking of the Seagram Building, its visionary designer/architect, **Ludwig Mies van der Rohe**, is the subject of two major exhibitions in New York, both running from June 21st to September 23rd. The **Whitney Museum** will host "Mies in America," while **MOMA's** "Mies in Berlin" will examine his influential pre-World War II designs. • For the ultimate in travel, prospective global-home owners can sign up to purchase a luxury "pad" on The World, an exclusive ocean liner being built by **ResidenSea**. Slated for its maiden cruise late this year, the ship will have spacious, fully equipped, two- and three-bedroom residences with interiors created by such signature designers as **Nina Campbell**, **J. P. Molyneux**, **Luciano Di Pilla**, and **Yran & Storbraaten**. The never-ending voyage will have extended stays at ports of call such as the Athens 2004 Olympics, the Grand Prix in Monaco, and the Cannes Film Festival. • Earlier this month in Cannes, the design future of commercial air travel was showcased at **Aircraft Interiors Expo 2001** and **Passenger Terminal Expo 2001**. For cutting-edge developments for both in-flight and on-ground high-end accommodations, log on to the exhibition sites, **www.ukintpress.com** and **www.passengerexpo.co.uk**.



Top: composite courtesy of Diller + Scofidio; *bottom:* courtesy of The Whitney Museum

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ÜBER-STYLE

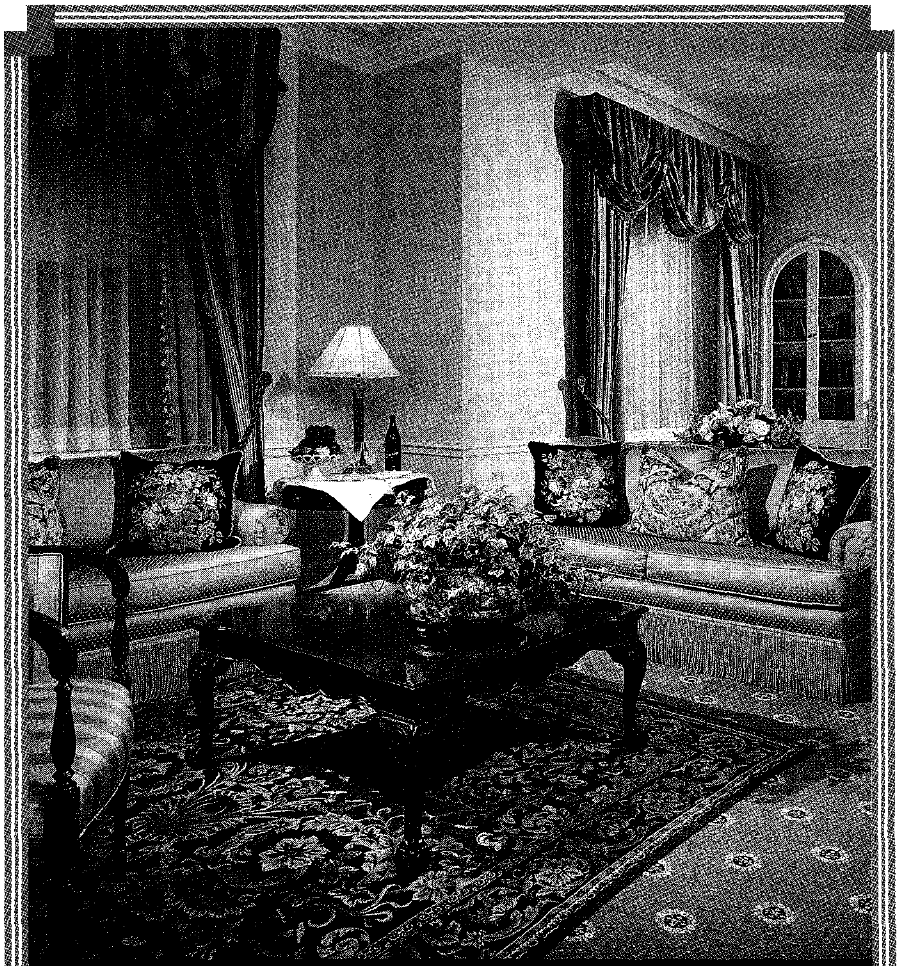
On the way to becoming the coolest capital on the Continent, Berlin is a city undergoing ambitious renovations. One stylish oasis that stands apart is the **Ritz-Carlton Schlosshotel**, a converted mansion near the Kurfürstendamm, about thirty minutes from the Brandenburg Gate. The master touch? Über-couturier Karl Lagerfeld is behind the splendid décor of eighteenth-century antiques and objets d'art that grace the hotel. Everything from the Ritz-Carlton's stationery to staff uniforms reflects the Chanel designer's august sense of refinement.

Looking for stylish cocktails in the happening Mitte district? **Bar Lounge 808** was recently added to the best hangout list of Berlin. From the street, its floor-to-ceiling windows reveal a sophisticated, jazz-hungry clientele sipping rum-soaked *caipiriñas*.

SOCIETY HELSINKI

Helsinki remains one of the more intriguing destinations for those with an eye for eclectic design and a gastronomic palette to match. One of the capital's more fascinating meeting places is the historic **Hotel Kämp**. Not unlike the Chelsea Hotel in New York City, the Kämp has always been a meeting place and favorite inn for artists and intellectuals like painter Akseli Gallen-Kallela, poet Eino Leino, and composer Jean Sibelius. The Hotel Kämp's designer, Carl Theodor Höijer, was considered one of the greatest Finnish architects of the nineteenth century. The newly restored hotel reopened its doors in May 1999 as part of The Luxury Collection of Starwood Hotels and Resorts. Nine floors are filled with elegant suites named after famous Finns.

For fabulous dining in Helsinki, the hotel's **Restaurant Kämp** offers some of the most inventive dishes to be found in Helsinki, and an impressive wine list to boot. Need something more informal? Try either **CK's**, the hotel's open kitchen brasserie, or **Kämp's Bar & Lounge**. Both have become top entries on this easygoing city's A-list.



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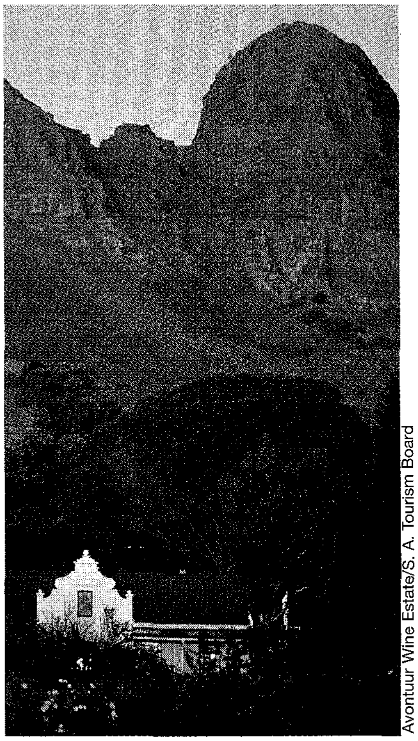
OUT OF AFRICA

While cosmopolitan cities like Pretoria and Johannesburg are home to some of the finest grand hotels anywhere, the southwestern cape of South Africa boasts an array of stylish Relais & Châteaux properties distinctively furnished to reflect an aura of casual elegance. Here, romantic inns and guest houses are celebrated for their distinctive English-inspired furnishings, remarkable cuisine, and spectacular views of the aqua-colored ocean.

For country right out of a Merchant Ivory script, romantics will adore the charm of **Hunter's Country House**, a two-hundred-acre estate consisting of luxurious, antiques-furnished thatched cottages, each with a fireplace and private patio. The cottages are surrounded by beautiful gardens that overlook the forest. Recently voted South Africa's hotel of the year, it has three baronial dining rooms, a sunny conservatory, and a cellar of fine international wines.

For anglophiles, there is the **Ellerman House**, an aristocratic villa that was turned into a hotel by its owner, Sir John Ellerman, in 1962. Choose from among nine Edwardian-style rooms and suites, most with spectacular views of the ocean. The hotel's extensive collection of South African art deserves attention. To enjoy it, meet for a drink or an apéritif in the lounge.

Perched atop a huge bluff overlooking Walker Bay sits the majestic **Marine** in the famous coastal village of Hermanus. With its Edwardian architecture and thematic hues of blue, the Marine is a turn-of-the-century colonial marvel. Everything about the hotel including the tables of the Orangery reflects things marine. Fresh seafood, naturally, is the specialty served in one of the hotel's two restaurants (the other specialty is Mediterranean), and there is a comprehensive list of regional wines that includes some of Cape Town's best.



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BOUNDLESS SOUTH AFRICA

For scenic country right out of a heady Merchant Ivory script, explore the regions of South Africa.

PASTEL PALETTE

Apart from its pristine beaches and clean air, Bermuda's colonial architecture and pastel-colored edifices leave an indelible mark on those who visit the twenty-one-mile-long, two-mile-wide island. For Grande Dame elegance, the recently renovated **Elbow Beach Bermuda** in Paget Parish deserves a nod. Built in 1908, the resort's historic oceanfront buildings—with their creamy yellow-limestone walls, white-tiered "wedding cake" roofs, and cobblestone driveway—provide an auspicious welcome. Fifty-five acres of lush botanical gardens stretch to a hilltop overlooking a half-mile of immaculate pink-sand beach. The luxurious main lobby is furnished with British colonial mahogany furniture and plump sofas that are begging for someone to daydream in. Storybook cottages dot a landscape that offers a stunning view of the turquoise waters.

Bought by a Saudi prince in 1991, Elbow Beach's former luxury was gradually restored, with the work finally completed seven years later. Boasting 240 renovated and newly decorated rooms, the hotel now includes a new porte cochère that reflects the grace and grand tradition of the hotel's original design. The name of Elbow Beach's main restaurant, **Seahorse Grill**, was retained, but its contemporary Bermudian cuisine has taken on brand new proportions with influences from the West Indies, the British Isles, Portugal, and the southern U.S.

ELBOW BEACH BERMUDA
The Paget Parish property's lobby is furnished to the hilt with British colonial mahogany furniture and accoutrements of Grande Dame elegance.

courtesy of Elbow Beach Bermuda

DECO DOWN UNDER

New Zealand's Art Deco bay city of **Napier** came about when a devastating earthquake ravaged the area in 1931. The 16,000 survivors refused to abandon the airy bluffs and black pebble beaches that made their South Pacific town and the Hawke's Bay region unique. Instead, they resolved to rebuild their town.

Napier's architects and designers drew inspiration from themes showcased at the 1925 Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes. As a result, Napier is awash in geometric stucco buildings painted in varied pastels that positively glow in the warm coastal sunlight. The sleek, linear structures—clothing boutiques, eateries, nightclubs, municipal

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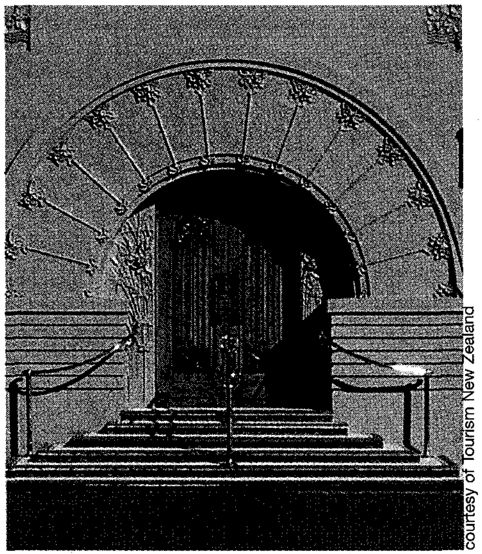
buildings, and even pharmacies—are all embellished with Art Deco details, including sunbursts and zigzag lightning bolts that are merged with designs created by the indigenous Maori.

Walking tours are perhaps the best way to appreciate Napier, and the best time of year to go is during Art Deco Weekend. It's three days of unadulterated fun, with such special events as a vintage car rally, biplane rides, and a Gatsby picnic. The weekend attracts travellers who come to shop at the many boutiques and the **Napier Antique Centre**, which is a classic example of "Maori Deco" design.

Where to eat? **Aqua**, a casual café in the 1932 Masonic Hotel, surrounds itself with sea blue and peach-colored walls and offers relaxed al fresco dining. Where to stay? Historic **McHardy House**, once a private luxury lodge built in the early twentieth century was recently restored, and has arresting views of the Pacific Ocean and Kaweka Range.



courtesy of Tourism New Zealand

NAPIER, NEW ZEALAND

Awash in geometric stucco buildings that glow in the sunlight, Napier's Art Deco details are merged with designs created by the Maori.

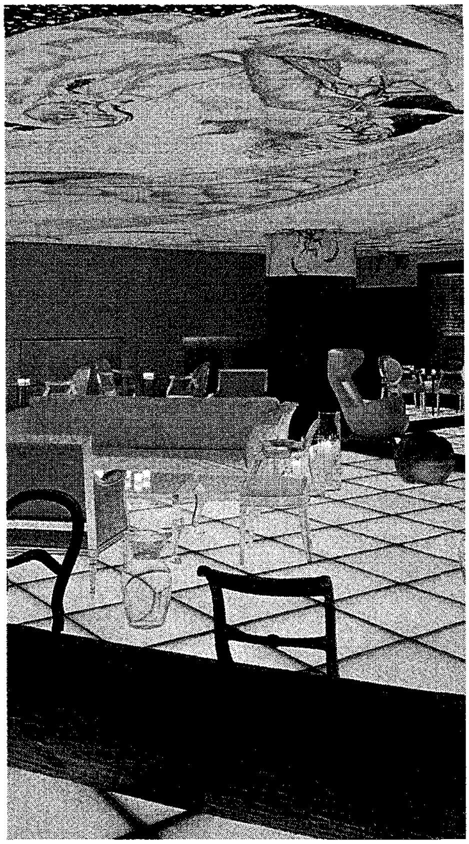
THE INN CROWD

On the subject of stylish design motifs, New York is home to a bevy of swank new hotels, along with some classic inns of *d'un certain âge* that have undergone extensive makeovers for the millennium.

The recently converted garage-cum-boutique hotel, **60 Thompson**, with an interior by Thomas O'Brien of the famed Aero Studios, is a palette of earth tones informing every room, as does an English Deco chaise known as the Thompson Chair. Don't miss the asymmetrical bar in the hotel's second-floor lounge.

Midtown is no slouch either, when it comes to happening new hotels. The "hotel of the moment" award goes to Ian Schrager's **Hudson Hotel**. The ceiling in the bar swirls with a Francesco Clemente mural, and a yellow dance floor glows in the dark. (Also, be on the lookout for Schrager's on-premises "lifestyle boutique" by year's end, to be stocked with goodies that have been hand-picked by the hotelier himself.)

Ever wonder what it would be like to stay overnight in an art gallery?



Michael Mundy/courtesy of the Hudson Hotel

HUDSON HOTEL BAR

Schrager has given Gotham an inspired piece of organized chaos and in-your-face style hard to ignore and harder to forget.

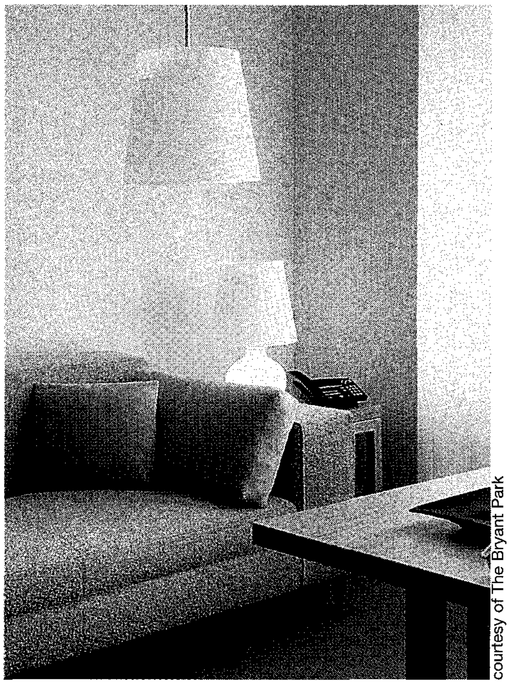
One such interior is the new **Chambers** hotel, a kind of "living museum" that architect David Rockwell designed to recreate the experience of staying in a collector's private townhouse. The works of a hundred emerging artists are showcased, including photography by filmmaker John Waters and original installations from Sheila Pepe.

Bryant Park, adjacent to the New York Public Library, is one of the city's more picturesque parks, and nowhere is there a better view of this verdant square than from the lobby bar of **The Bryant Park** hotel. Occupying the landmark American Radiator Building, this midtown hotel is a tailored oasis, with British architect David Chipperfield's tasteful minimalist furnishings throughout. High-profile chef Rick Laakkonen presides over the hotel's restaurant, **Ilo**.

Farther uptown, the **Waldorf-Astoria** unveils the legendary **Starlight Roof** next month. Once Gotham's most glamorous nightclub, it has been restored to showcase its original Art Deco splendor. Executive Director of Catering James W. Blauvelt calls the restoration the most significant alteration to the hotel's public space in its entire history.

"We have uncovered incredible vintage architectural details that were lost during fifty years of successive waves of modernization," says Blauvelt. The 6,000-square-foot Starlight Roof will feature many of the same oversized windows that had disappeared during earlier renovations. The mezzanine's period nickel-and-brass railings have resurfaced, as has the decorative grill on the glass ceiling that once filtered starlight to the elite nineteen-thirties and forties society crowd below.

(continued)



courtesy of The Bryant Park

THE BRYANT PARK

Brit architect David Chipperfield's minimalist furnishings add a tailored touch to this new midtown oasis overlooking the landmark New York Public Library.

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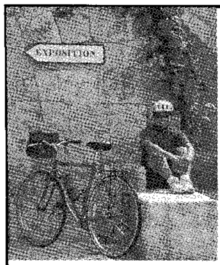

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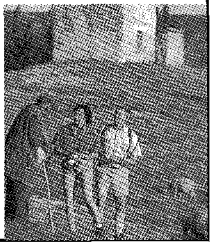

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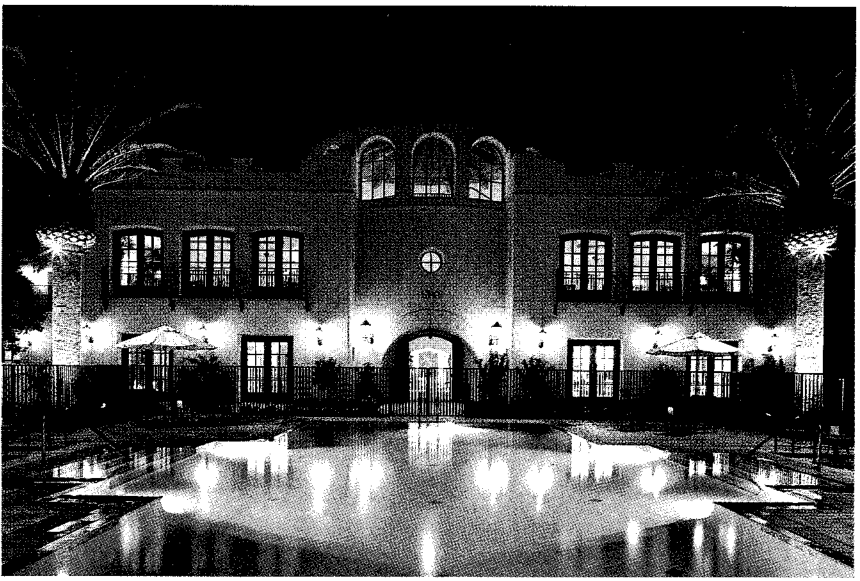
A SPA IS BORN

Wanda Dworman had a mission, both literally and figuratively. Along with her husband Alvin, she is the owner and developer of the new hedonist haven, **Bacara Resort & Spa**, in Santa Barbara. The setting could not be more seductive: A cluster of twenty-six Spanish colonial, mission-style buildings—stucco finishes, covered archways, wooden trellises, and terra cotta tile roofs—descends a hundred feet down the cliffs of the Santa Ynez mountains to the Pacific, and then ambles back up again. Depending on which way one faces, the views are spectacular panoramas of the ocean below or the mountains above. Situated throughout are pools, courtyards, and walkways.

While Bacara's spectacular architecture and design results from a collaboration between Robert Glazier and Michael Leclere, there is little doubt that the Dwormans are in the fine print of every detail. Three-hundred-and-eleven luxurious guest rooms and forty-nine specialty suites (more than half with fireplaces) have interiors designed by Hirsch Bender Associates. Many of the guest rooms feature antique dark-wood furniture, wooden shutters, and a tasteful if restrained palette of navy blue and ivory.



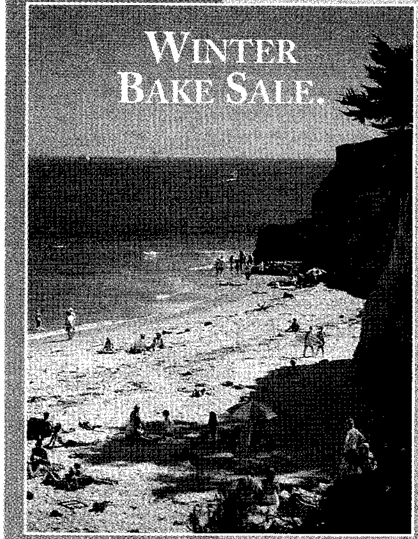
courtesy of the Bacara Resort & Spa

BACARA RESORT & SPA

The dramatic 42,000-square-foot spa sports a three-story entry tower, all-cedar ceiling, and sun-splashed spiral stairway leading to rooftop decks ideal for sunning.

Particularly dramatic is the 42,000-square-foot spa with its three-story entry tower, all-cedar ceiling, and sun-splashed spiral stairway that leads to rooftop decks for sunning. With thirty-six treatment rooms, Bacara guests never have to cool their heels waiting for a massage, facial, or body wrap.

Dining at Bacara's **Restaurant Miró** provides an epicurean escape from the monastic overtones that lend such chic to the resort. Here Leclere has worked in the palette of burgundy and blue that was favored by the brilliant artist for whom the restaurant is named. Those same colors resonate in Miró-like motifs on the custom-made china. Throughout the restaurant, a trio of bronze Miró sculptures from the Dwormans' private collection is



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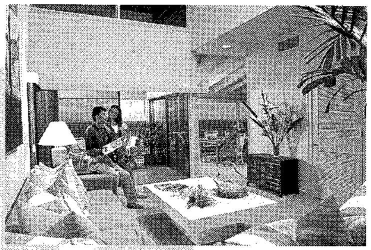

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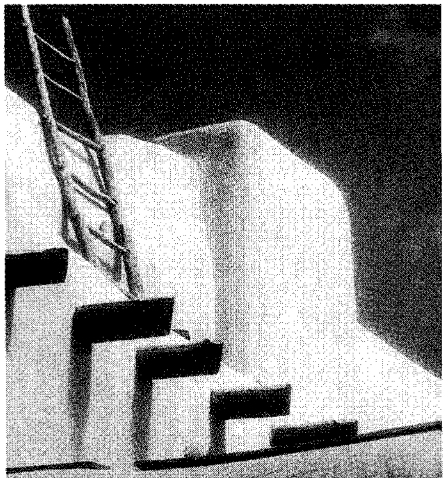

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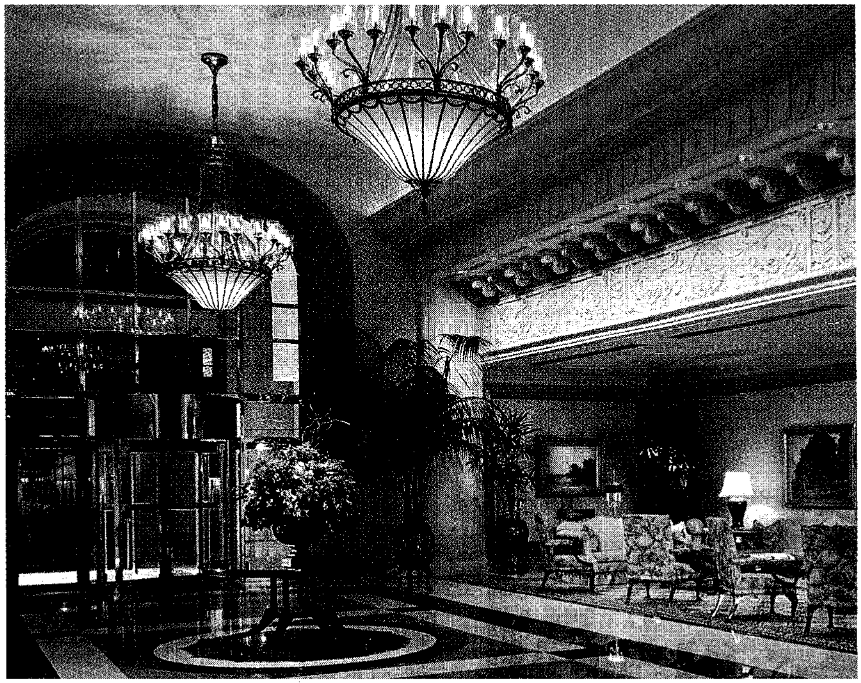
showcased. Two unframed canvasses that suggest the artist's signature works are mounted on blocks of Santa Barbara sandstone. Another dramatic focal point is the restaurant's ten-by-twenty-foot limestone fireplace.

STAR POWER

The grand lobby of the **Fairmont Hotel Vancouver** has been likened to a nineteen-thirties Hollywood movie set. And given the industry's current fascination with shooting on location in Vancouver, actors can often be seen winding down amid the clusters of plush, high-back chairs and towering potted palms. Newly renovated by the Dallas and D.C.-based design firm of ForrestPerkins, this glorious landmark is replete with Old World elegance, from its custom chandeliers to its inlaid Italian marble floors. Full-size drawings for the impressive stone carvings on the hotel's exterior were discovered languishing in basement storage. The plaster frieze panels that adorn the lobby have been adapted from this artwork, and several of the original drawings now grace the promenade. The hotel's spacious ballroom, with its vaulted ceiling and high-arched windows, recalls a bygone era of style and serenity.

The Fairmont's main restaurant, **900 West**, has an semi-circular wine bar that offers an impressive array of wines by the glass. Picasso lithographs are on display, and a custom-made carpet features a unique griffin and dolphin motif. Rich jewel tones of garnet, topaz, and jade festoon the restaurant, which features an exposed kitchen.



courtesy of the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver

FAIRMONT HOTEL VANCOUVER
Plaster frieze panels that adorn the lobby have been adapted from full-size drawings of the exterior's original stone carvings.

On the other side of Canada, with a ten-year ForrestPerkins face-lift coming to a close, the **Fairmont Royal York** has Toronto abuzz. The firm has cleverly recreated the original luster of the seventy-year-old hotel. Principal designer, Deborah Lloyd Forrest, calls the marble mosaic floor in the seventeenth-century-style Italianate lobby her "crowning glory." No less impressive is the hotel's new restaurant, **Epic**. With a decidedly modern design, Epic bridges the gap between the seventeenth century and the new millennium.

The colors of the restaurant are "citrus-inspired lemon and green, along with aubergine and shades of blue," says Forrest. Functional elements such as undulating banquettes and large wine displays blur the line between bar and restaurant. Striking contemporary art from Toronto artists draws the diner further into the room. "Everything—art, food, wine, flowers—is all connected and continually flowing," says Forrest.

(Paris-based writer Ashley Starr has written about travel and design for major magazines and newspapers around the world.)

NEWS BRIEFS

Star Alliance is a consortium of fifteen elite airlines covering 815 destinations in 130 countries. Formed to better meet the needs of international travellers and to ease the rigors of between-flight transfers with its ticket endorsement waivers, it now provides Star Gold priority passengers with airport oases. Kick back in one of five hundred lounges worldwide. • Set in Maui's tropical paradise, **The Kapalua Villas** offers houses of up to five bedrooms in addition to its 280 villas with oceanfront or fairway views. The grand estate? A palatial "house of heavenly shelter" known as Hale Halaulani. • When luxury liner Crystal Symphony embarks from Los Angeles on January 17, 2002, the ultimate voyage begins: **Crystal Cruises'** one-hundred-day Grand Pacific Circle odyssey, with thirty-three port of calls in twenty Pacific Ocean countries on four continents. The ship devotes a full upper deck to deluxe suites, including two penthouses with private verandas, spacious living and dining areas, and Jacuzzis. • After its annual winter recess, **Pink Beach Club & Cottages** in Bermuda reopened with ten newly refurbished oceanview suites, with Italian ceramic tile floors and spacious patios or balconies. • **Backroads** introduces Bordeaux to its array of summer biking tours in France. After countryside rides and winery respites, bikers end the day in elegant lodgings, including the sixteenth-century Château des Vigiers decorated with antiques. • In "the city that never sleeps," midtown boutique hotel **The Benjamin** has introduced a Sleep Concierge to guarantee a restful repose. After relaxing treatments at the spa, guests can tuck themselves into custom-designed beds with a selection of eleven rest-enhancing pillows to choose from! • **Cox & Kings** has unveiled a Signature Events program. Elite India offerings can include lunch at the exclusive Bombay Gymkhana as the guest of a club member, afternoon tea in a VIP box at a Delhi polo match, and cocktails with a maharajah in his medieval palace. • For an upscale wilderness getaway, **Jenny Lake Lodge** in Jackson Hole's Grand Teton National Park offers beautifully appointed cabins and suites that have earned AAA's four-diamond rating. Televisions? None. Telephones? Only on request. • Luxury describes the short-term luxury leases at South Carolina's Hilton Head Island that **Seacoast Homes & Villas Rentals** makes available. Choice pickings? In scenic Palmetto Dunes, there's the three-bedroom, high-ceilinged Cartgate Home and the Hampton Place villas, which feature spacious master suites with sunken tubs and oceanview decks. • New from **Mountain Travel-Sobek** is a nine-day, hacienda-to-hacienda hiking trip in Ecuador. After a day of birdwatching, retreat for the evening to exquisite country inns converted from large colonial estates, most dating back to the sixteenth century. • Specializing in group travel to exotic destinations,

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Peter Voll Associates offers an October trip to Saudi Arabia and an Arabian Gulf voyage slated for November aboard the luxurious all-suite Song of Flower. • While all **Fort Recovery Estate Villas** boast cathedral ceilings, beachfront views, and dinners delivered to your door, the Tortola property also offers a four-bedroom house on the beach—with an art gallery, well-stocked library, huge kitchen, and sliding doors that open to a wraparound porch. • In a sumptuous, Down Under holiday custom-designed by **Qantas Vacations**, step from the luxury of a Qantas first-class flight—sleeper suits for the full-length sleeper seats, a video library, and a feast with fresh ingredients—into the Hotel InterContinental Sydney's deluxe Australia Suite, or a butler-serviced penthouse at the five-star Hayman on the Great Barrier Reef, or the Balcony Suite at Auckland's The Carlton Hotel. • Be forewarned. If you book one of **Monterey Plaza Hotel & Spa's** luxurious penthouse suites—vaulted ceilings, lavish mahogany furniture, plush carpets, rich stonework, artworks, and private decks with sweeping Monterey Bay views—you may never leave the premises to take in the sights. • With a forte in European bicycle and walking trips, **Van Gogh Tours** hits the road in France this summer with a deluxe Loire Valley tour that features overnights in historic châteaux, including the elegant seventeenth-century Château du Breuil in Cheverny. • **Santa Barbara**, with its white stucco and red-tile roofs, has been likened to the French Riviera. No surprise then that the resort town prides itself on its haute lifestyle, exemplified by exclusive accommodations such as those at the celebrity-graced Montecito Inn and the beachfront Four Seasons Biltmore. • Once a stately mansion, the **Surrey Hotel** in New York's fashionable Upper East Side caters to a sophisticated clientele. It has spacious suites adorned with eighteenth-century décor (molded ceilings, brass fixtures, and beveled mirrors) and room service from Café Boulud. • Looking for the extraordinary in ocean travel? **TravLtips Cruise & Freighter Travel Association** accommodates guests on freighters featuring private staterooms and elegantly served meals that are taken with the ship's officers. • Log on to **The New Mexico Department of Tourism** Web site to browse for lavish lodging. A Santa Fe sampler of pueblo-style architecture: La Fonda Hotel, adorned with hand-carved wooden furniture, and the Eldorado Hotel, decorated with original Southwestern artwork. • At **Long Bay Beach Resort & Villas**, Tortola's secluded fifty-two-acre estate, there are hillside suites with oceanview balconies as well as remodeled beach-front cabanas with marble vanities and hammocks on surf-side decks. • **Peter Deilmann Cruises** has christened its newest European river-cruise ship, the five-star Casanova, which begins weekly sailings on the Po River from Venice on April 28. The air-conditioned vessel features upper-deck cabins with French doors. • Catering to travellers lured by Northern Spain and Portugal, **Cobblestone Small Group Tours** arranges upscale overnights that include the five-star Hotel Carlton in Bilbao and the Buçaco Palace, a former residence of Portuguese royalty in the heart of a hilltop forest. •

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DUBAI DELIGHT

Heading for our hotel from the Dubai airport, I glimpsed a vast white sail rising out of the water, which came closer and closer as we drove towards it. Imagine my surprise when the sail turned out to be the Bourj Al Arab (The Arab Tower), our five-star hotel that simply has to be seen to be believed. The hotel is built on an artificial island linked by magnetic rail to the coast proper, and the view from its tall tower, which mimics a lateen (the triangular sail of an African rig), is truly magnificent.

No less spectacular are the views from its underwater seafood restaurant. We particularly enjoyed scuba diving and afterwards lunching on grilled hamour, a kind of snapper we had just seen darting in and out of the reef shallows. With garlic cream and lemon, the charcoal-broiled fish makes an excellent meal in temperatures where heavier fare would make one listless. The hotel's palatial ambience, with its granite and marble interiors, adds to the pleasures of sojourning in the coastal Dubai suburb where it is located.

Abid Vali
Chicago, IL

LOUNGE WIZARDS

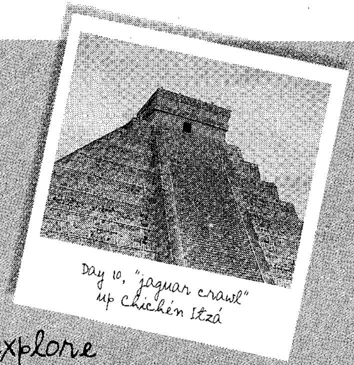
Two years ago, our close friend Lisa decided to move back to Bristol, England to be closer to her family. When she bid us adieu at the San Francisco airport, she made us promise to visit. We didn't really relish a tiring, multihour flight from SFO to Heathrow, but when we heard about Virgin Atlantic Airways' stylish, upper-class amenities and newly opened clubhouse, we began to make plans.

My partner and I hate rushing to the airport two hours early for international flights—what a boring waste of time and energy! So when we arrived at the airport, we immediately went into lounge mode and sought out the clubhouse, four floors above the hubbub of the terminal. We were instantly impressed. The spacious lounge has comfortable sofas and even daybeds, as well as delicacies cooked by a private chef. But most impressive is its architectural elegance: a thirty-six-foot-long glass bar, as well as floor-to-ceiling multicolored glass panels that afford a spectacular view of San Francisco Bay.

By the time we boarded the plane, we felt relaxed and ready for the hectic seat-herding normally encountered when embarking on a grueling flight. But there was none of this. I took off my shoes, reclined my sleeper seat, and snoozed comfortably under a soft duvet. My spouse availed herself of the Inflight Beauty Therapy service for a private massage and manicure. Later, we met up on leather stools at the bar (our drinks enlivened by propeller-shaped swizzle sticks). When we got hungry, we ordered food from Virgin's "Freedom Menu" (anything served anytime).

At Heathrow, we headed for Virgin's "Revivals" lounge and found private shower rooms stocked to the hilt with everything we needed to freshen up. Though we had anticipated being jet-lagged for the duration of our Bristol stay, quite the opposite was true. We're now thinking about making this terrific commute a habit.

D. Philip Ledtke/L. M. Brooks
San Francisco, CA



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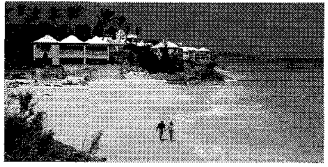

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MEDICAL DISPATCH

FINAL CUT

Medical arrogance and the decline of the autopsy.

BY ATUL GAWANDE

Your patient is dead; the family is gathered. And there is one last thing that you must ask about: the autopsy. How should you go about it? You could do it offhandedly, as if it were the most ordinary thing in the world: "Shall we do an autopsy, then?" Or you could be firm, use your Sergeant Joe Friday voice: "Unless you have strong objections, we will need to do an autopsy, ma'am." Or you could take yourself out of it: "I am sorry, but they require me to ask, Do you want an autopsy done?"

What you can't be these days is mealy-mouthed about it. I once took care of a woman in her eighties who had given up her driver's license only to get hit by a car—driven by someone even older—while she was walking to a bus stop. She sustained a depressed skull fracture and cerebral bleeding, and, despite surgery, she died a few days later. So, on the spring afternoon after the patient took her last breath, I stood beside her and bowed my head with the tearful family. Then, as delicately as I could—not even using the awful word—I said, "If it's all right, we'd like to do an examination to confirm the cause of death."

"An *autopsy*?" a nephew said, horrified. He looked at me as if I were a buzzard circling his aunt's body. "Hasn't she been through enough?"

The autopsy is in a precarious state. A generation ago, it was routine; now it has become a rarity. Human beings have never quite become comfortable with the idea of having their bodies cut open after they die. Even for a surgeon, the sense of violation is inescapable.

Not long ago, I went to observe the dissection of a thirty-eight-year-old woman I had taken care of who had died after a long struggle with heart disease. The dissecting room was in the sub-basement, past the laundry and a loading dock, behind an unmarked metal door. It had high ceilings, peeling paint, and a brown tiled floor that sloped down to a central drain. There was a Bunsen burner on a countertop, and an old-style grocer's hanging scale, with a big clock-face red-arrow gauge and a pan underneath, for weighing organs. On shelves all around the room there were gray portions of brain, bowel, and other organs soaking in formalin in Tupperware-like containers. The facility seemed rundown, chintzy, low-tech. On a rickety gurney in the corner was my patient, sprawled out, completely naked. The autopsy team was just beginning its work.

Surgical procedures can be grisly, but dissections are somehow worse. In even the most gruesome operations—skin-grafting, amputations—surgeons maintain an attitude of tenderness and aestheticism toward their work. We know that the bodies we cut still pulse with life, and that these are people who will wake again. But in the dissecting room, where the person is gone and only the carcass remains, you find little of this delicacy, and the difference is visible in the smallest details. There is, for example, the simple matter of how a body is moved from gurney to table. In the operating room, we follow a careful, elaborate procedure for the unconscious patient, involving a canvas-sleeved rolling board and several gentle movements. We don't want so much as a bruise. Down here, by contrast, someone grabbed my patient's arm, another person a leg, and they just yanked. When her skin stuck to the stainless-steel dissecting table, they had to wet her and the table down with a hose before they could jerk her the rest of the way.

The young pathologist for the case stood on the sidelines and let a pathology assistant take the knife. Like many of her colleagues, the pathologist had not been drawn to her field by autopsies but by the high-tech detective work that she got to do on tissue from living patients. She was happy to leave the dissection to the P.A., who had more experience at it anyway.

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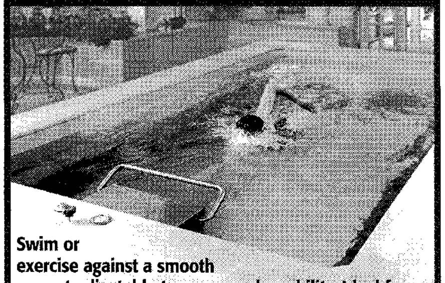

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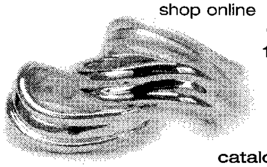

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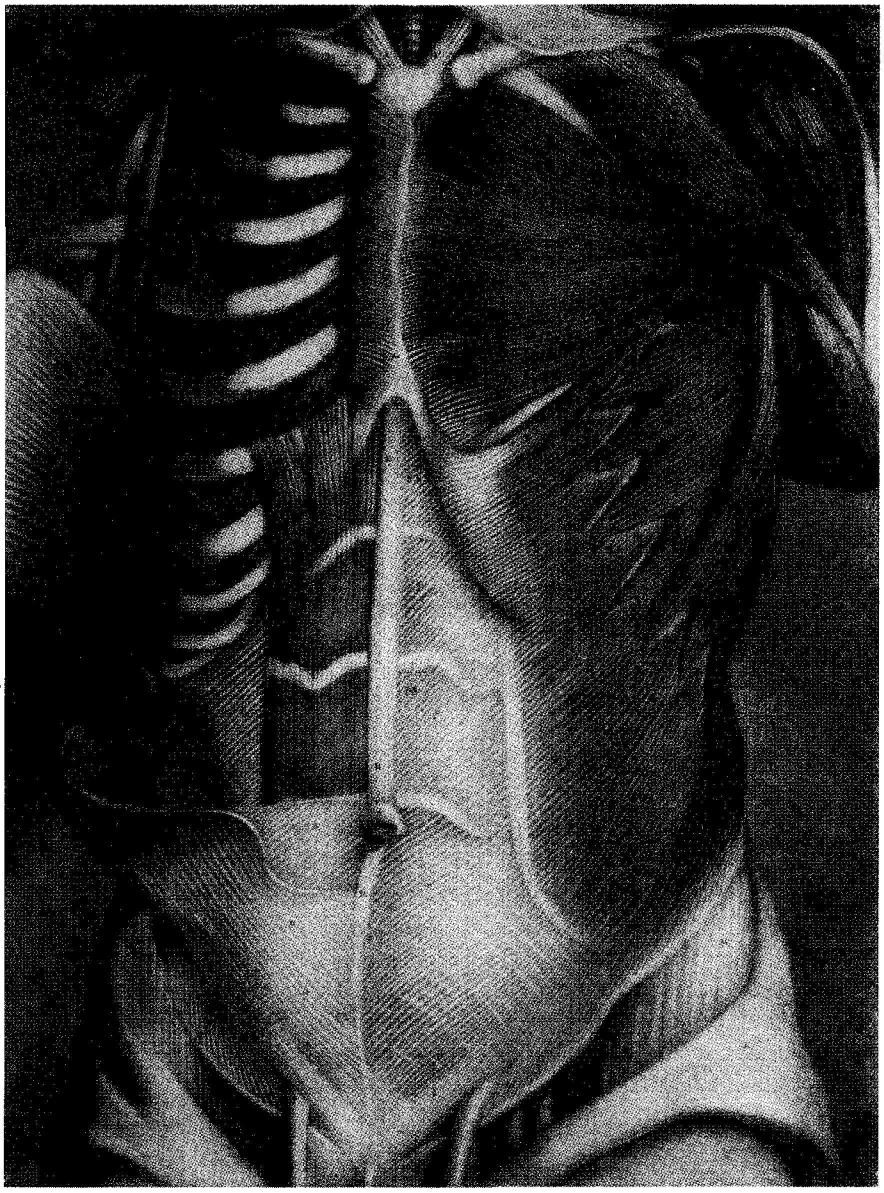
The P.A. was a tall, slender woman of around thirty with straight sandy-brown hair. She was wearing the full protective garb of mask, face shield, gloves, and blue plastic gown. Once the body was on the table, she placed a six-inch metal block under the back, between the shoulder blades, so that the head fell back and the chest arched up. Then she took a scalpel in her hand, a big No. 6 blade, and made a huge Y-shaped incision that came down diagonally from each shoulder, curving slightly around each breast before reaching the midline, and then continued down the abdomen to the pubis.

Surgeons get used to the opening of bodies. It is easy to detach yourself from the person on the table and become absorbed by the details of method and anatomy. Nevertheless, I couldn't help wincing as she did her work: she was holding the scalpel like a pen, which forced her to cut slowly and jaggedly with the tip of the blade. Surgeons are taught to stand straight and parallel to their incision, hold the knife between the thumb and four fingers, like a violin bow, and draw the belly of the blade through the skin in a single, smooth slice to the exact depth desired. The P.A. was practically sawing her way through my patient.


Autopsy studies show that doctors frequently misdiagnose the cause of death.

From there, the evisceration was swift. The P.A. flayed back the skin flaps. With an electric saw, she cut through the exposed ribs along both sides. Then she lifted the rib cage as if it were the hood of a car, opened the abdomen, and removed all the major organs—including the heart, the lungs, the liver, the bowels, and the kidneys. Then the skull was sawed open, and the brain, too, was removed. Meanwhile, the pathologist was at a back table, weighing and examining everything, and preparing samples for microscopy and thorough testing.

Despite all this, the patient came out looking surprisingly undisturbed. The P.A. had followed the usual procedure and kept the skull incision behind the woman's ears, where it was completely hidden by her hair. She had also taken care to close the chest and abdomen neatly, sewing the incision tightly with weaved seven-cord thread. My patient actually looked much the same as before, except now a little collapsed in the middle. (The standard consent allows the hospital to keep the organs for testing and research. This common and long-established practice is now causing huge controversy in Britain—the media have branded it "organ stripping"—but in America it remains generally accepted.) Families can still have an open-casket funeral, and most do. Morticians employ fillers to restore a corpse's shape, and when they're done you cannot tell that an autopsy has been performed.

Still, when it is time to ask for a family's permission to do such a thing, the images weigh on everyone's mind—not least the doctor's. You strive to achieve a cool, dispassionate attitude toward these matters. But doubts nevertheless creep in.

One of the first patients for whom I was expected to request an autopsy was a seventy-five-year-old retired New England doctor who died one winter night while I was with him. Herodotus Sykes (not his real name, but not unlike it, either) had been rushed to the hospital with an infected, rupturing abdominal aortic aneurysm and taken to emergency surgery. He survived it, and recovered steadily until, eighteen days later, his blood pressure dropped alarmingly and blood began to pour from a drainage tube in his abdomen. "The aortic stump must have blown out," his surgeon said. Residual infection must have weakened the suture line. We could have operated again, but the patient's chances were poor, and his surgeon didn't think he would be willing to take any more.

He was right. No more surgery, Sykes told me. He'd been through enough. We called Mrs. Sykes, who was staying with a friend, about two hours away, and she set out for the hospital.

It was about midnight. I sat with him as he lay silent and bleeding, his arms slack at his sides, his eyes without fear. I imagined his wife out on the Mass Pike, frantic, helpless, with six lanes, virtually empty at that hour, stretching far ahead.

Sykes held on, and at 2:15 A.M. his wife arrived. She turned ashen at the sight of him, but she steadied herself. She gently took his hand in hers. She squeezed, and he squeezed back. I left them to themselves.

At two-forty-five, the nurse called me in. I listened with my stethoscope, then turned to Mrs. Sykes and told her that he was gone. She had her husband's Yankee reserve, but she broke into quiet tears, weeping into her hands, and seemed suddenly frail and small. A friend who had come with her soon appeared, took her by the arm, and led her out of the room.

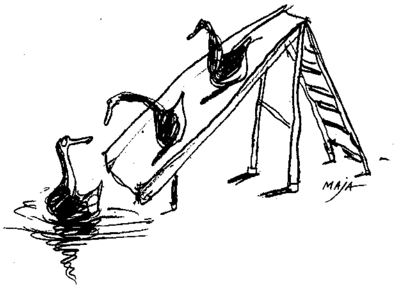
We are instructed to request an autopsy on everyone as a means of confirming the cause of death and catching our mistakes. And this was the moment I was supposed to ask—with the wife despondent and reeling with shock. But surely, I began to think, here was a case in which an autopsy would be pointless. We knew what had happened—a persistent infection, a rupture. We were sure of it. What would cutting the man apart accomplish?

And so I let Mrs. Sykes go. I could have caught her as she walked through the I.C.U.'s double doors. Or even called her on the phone later. But I never did.

Such reasoning, it appears, has become commonplace in medicine. Doctors are seeking so few autopsies that in recent years *The Journal of the American Medical Association* has twice felt the need to declare "war on the nonautopsy." According to the most recent statistics available, autopsies have been done in less than ten per cent of deaths; many hospitals do none. This is a dramatic turnabout. Through much of the twentieth century, doctors diligently obtained autopsies in the majority of all deaths—and it had taken centuries to reach this point. As Kenneth Iserson recounts in his fascinating almanac, "Death to Dust," physicians have performed autopsies for more than two thousand years. But for most of history they were rarely performed, and only for legal purposes (if religions permitted them at all—Islam, Shinto, and the Greek Orthodox Church still frown on them). The Roman physician Antistius performed one of the earliest forensic examinations on record, in 44 B.C., on Julius Caesar, documenting twenty-three wounds, including a final, fatal stab to the chest. In 1410, the Catholic Church itself ordered an autopsy—on Pope Alexander V, to determine whether his successor had poisoned him. No evidence of this was found.

Even in the nineteenth century, long after church strictures had loosened, people in the West rarely allowed doctors to autopsy their family members for medical purposes. As a result, the practice was largely clandestine. Some doctors went ahead and autopsied hospital patients immediately after death, before relatives could turn up to object. Others waited until burial and then robbed the graves, either personally or through accomplices, an activity that continued into the twentieth century. To deter such autopsies, some families would post nighttime guards at the grave site—hence the term "graveyard shift." Others placed heavy stones on the coffins. In 1878, one company in Columbus, Ohio, even sold "torpedo coffins," equipped with pipe bombs rigged to blow up if they were tampered with. Yet doctors remained undeterred. Ambrose Bierce's "The Devil's Dictionary," published in 1906, defined "grave" as "a place in which the dead are laid to await the coming of the medical student."

By the turn of the century, however, prominent physicians such as Rudolf Virchow, in Berlin, Karl Rokitansky, in Vienna, and William Osler, in Baltimore, began to win popular support for the practice. They defended it as a tool of discovery, one that was used to identify the cause of tuberculosis, reveal how to treat appendicitis, and establish the existence of Alzheimer's disease. They showed that autopsies prevented errors—that without them doctors could not know when their diagnoses were incorrect. Most deaths were a mystery then, and perhaps what clinched the argument was the notion that autopsies could provide families with answers—give the story of a loved one's life a comprehensible ending. Once doctors had insured a dignified and respectful dissection at the hospital, public opinion turned. With time, doctors who did *not* obtain autopsies were viewed with suspicion. By the end of the Second World War, the autopsy was firmly established as a routine part of death in Europe and North America.



So what accounts for its decline? It's not because families refuse—to judge from recent studies, they still grant that permission up to eighty per cent of the time. Doctors, once so eager to perform autopsies that they stole bodies, have simply stopped asking. Some people ascribe this to shady motives. It has been said that hospitals are trying to save money by avoiding autopsies, since insurers don't pay for them, or that doctors avoid them in order to cover up evidence of malpractice. And yet autopsies lost money and uncovered malpractice when they were popular, too.

Instead, I suspect, what discourages autopsies is medicine's twenty-first-century, tall-in-the-saddle confidence. When I failed to ask Mrs. Sykes whether we could autopsy her husband, it was not because of the expense, or because I feared that the autopsy would uncover an error. It was the opposite: I didn't see much likelihood that an error would be found. Today, we have M.R.I. scans, ultrasound, nuclear medicine, molecular testing, and much more. When somebody dies, we already know why. We don't need an autopsy to find out.

Or so I thought. Then I had a patient who changed my mind.

He was in his sixties, whiskered and cheerful, a former engineer who had found success in retirement as an artist. I will call him Mr. Jolly, because that's what he was. He was also what we call a vasculopath—he did not seem to have an undiseased artery in him. Whether because of his diet or his genes or the fact that he used to smoke, he had had, in the previous decade, one heart attack, two abdominal aortic-aneurysm repairs, four bypass operations to keep blood flowing past blockages in his leg arteries, and several balloon procedures to keep hardened arteries open. Still, I never knew him to take a dark view of his lot. "Well, you can't get miserable about it," he'd say. He had wonderful children. He had beautiful grandchildren. "But, aargh, the wife," he'd go on. She would be sitting right there at the bedside, and would roll her eyes, and he'd break into a grin.

Mr. Jolly had come into the hospital for treatment of a wound infection in his legs. But he soon developed congestive heart failure, causing fluid to back up into his lungs. Breathing became steadily harder for him, until we had to put him in the I.C.U., intubate him, and place him on a ventilator. A two-day admission turned into two weeks. With a regimen of diuretics and a change in heart medications, however, his heart failure reversed, and his lungs recovered. And one bright Sunday morning he was reclining in bed, breathing on his own, watching the morning shows on the TV set that hung from the ceiling. "You're doing marvellously," I said. I told him we would transfer him out of intensive care by the afternoon. He would probably be home in a couple of days.

Two hours later, a code-blue call went out on the overhead speakers. When I got to the I.C.U. and saw the nurse hunched over Mr. Jolly, doing chest compressions, I blurted out an angry curse. He'd been fine, the nurse explained, just watching TV, when suddenly he sat upright with a look of shock and then fell back, unresponsive. At first, he was asystolic—no heart rhythm on the monitor—and then the rhythm came back, but he had no pulse. A crowd of staffers set to work. I had him intubated, gave him fluids and epinephrine, had someone call the attending surgeon at home, someone else check the morning lab-test results. An X-ray technician shot a portable chest film.

I mentally ran through possible causes. There were not many. A collapsed lung, but I heard good breath sounds with my stethoscope, and when his X-ray came back the lungs looked fine. A massive blood loss, but his abdomen wasn't swelling, and his decline happened so quickly that bleeding just didn't make sense. Extreme acidity of the blood could do it, but his lab tests were fine. Then there was cardiac tamponade—bleeding into the sac that contains the heart. I took a six-inch spinal needle on a syringe, pushed it through the skin below the breastbone, and advanced it to the heart sac. I found no bleeding. That left only one possibility: a pulmonary embolism—a blood clot that flips into the lung and instantly wedges off all blood flow. And nothing could be done about that.

I went out and spoke to the attending surgeon by phone and then to the chief resident, who had just arrived. An embolism was the only logical explanation, they agreed. I went back into the room and stopped the code. "Time of death: 10:23 A.M.," I announced. I phoned his wife at home, told her that things had taken a turn for the worse, and asked her to come in.

This shouldn't have happened; I was sure of it. I scanned the records for clues. Then I found one. In a lab test done the day before, the patient's clotting had seemed slow, which wasn't serious, but an I.C.U. physician had decided to correct it with vitamin K. A frequent complication with vitamin K is blood clots. I was furious. Giving the vitamin was completely unnecessary—just fixing a number on a lab test. Both the chief resident and I lit into the physician. We all but accused him of killing the patient.

When Mrs. Jolly arrived, we took her to a family room where it was quiet and calm, with table lamps instead of fluorescent lights and soft, plump chairs. I could see from her face that she'd already surmised the worst. His heart had stopped suddenly, we told her, because of a pulmonary embolism. We said the medicines we gave him may have contributed to it. I took her in to see him and left her with him. After a while, she came out, her hands trembling and her face stained with tears. Then, remarkably, she thanked us. We had kept him for her all these years, she said. Maybe so, but neither of us felt any pride about what had just happened.

I asked her the required question. I told her that we wanted to perform an autopsy and needed her permission. We thought we already knew what had happened, but an autopsy would confirm it, I said. She considered my request for a moment. If an autopsy would help us, she finally said, then we could do it. I said, as I was supposed to, that it would. I wasn't sure I believed it.

I wasn't assigned to the operating room the following morning, so I went down to observe the autopsy. When I arrived, Mr. Jolly was already laid out on the dissecting table, his arms splayed, skin flayed back, chest exposed, abdomen open. I put on a gown, gloves, and a mask, and went up close. The P.A. began buzzing through the ribs on the left side with the electric saw, and immediately blood started seeping out, as dark and

"Dear President . . ."

viscous as crankcase oil. Puzzled, I helped him lift open the rib cage. The left side of the chest was full of blood. I felt along the pulmonary arteries for a hardened, embolized clot, but there was none. He hadn't had an embolism after all. We suctioned out three litres of blood, lifted the left lung, and the answer appeared before our eyes. The thoracic aorta was almost three times larger than it should have been, and there was a half-inch hole in it. The man had ruptured an aortic aneurysm and had bled to death almost instantly.

In the days afterward, I apologized to the physician I'd reamed out over the vitamin, and pondered how we had managed to miss the diagnosis. I looked back through the patient's old X-rays and now saw a shadowy outline of what must have been his aneurysm. But none of us, not even the radiologists, had caught it. Even if we had caught it, we wouldn't have dared to do anything about it until weeks after treating his infection and heart failure, and that would have been too late. It disturbed me, however, to have felt so confident about what had happened that day and to have been so wrong.

The most perplexing thing was his final chest X-ray, the one we had taken during the code blue. With all that blood filling the chest, I should have seen at least a haze over the left side. But when I pulled the film out to look again there was nothing.

How often do autopsies turn up a major misdiagnosis in the cause of death? I would have guessed this happened rarely, in one or two per cent of cases at most. According to three studies done in 1998 and 1999, however, the figure is about forty per cent. A large review of autopsy studies concluded that in about a third of the misdiagnoses the patients would have been expected to live if proper treatment had been administered. George Lundberg, a pathologist and former editor of *The Journal of the American Medical Association* who has done more than anyone to call attention to these figures, points out the most surprising fact of all: the rates at which misdiagnosis is detected have not improved in autopsy studies since at least 1938.

With all the recent advances in imaging and diagnostics, it's hard to accept that we not only get the diagnosis wrong in two out of five of our patients who die but that we have also failed to improve over time. To see if this could really be true, doctors at Harvard put together a simple study. They went back into their hospital records to see how often autopsies picked up missed diagnoses in 1960 and 1970, before the advent of CT, ultrasound, nuclear scanning, and other technologies, and then in 1980, after they became widely used. The researchers found no improvement. Regardless of the decade, physicians missed a quarter of fatal infections, a third of heart attacks, and almost two-thirds of pulmonary emboli in their patients who died.

In most cases, it wasn't technology that failed. Rather, the physicians did not consider the correct diagnosis in the first place. The perfect test or scan may have been available, but the physicians never ordered it.

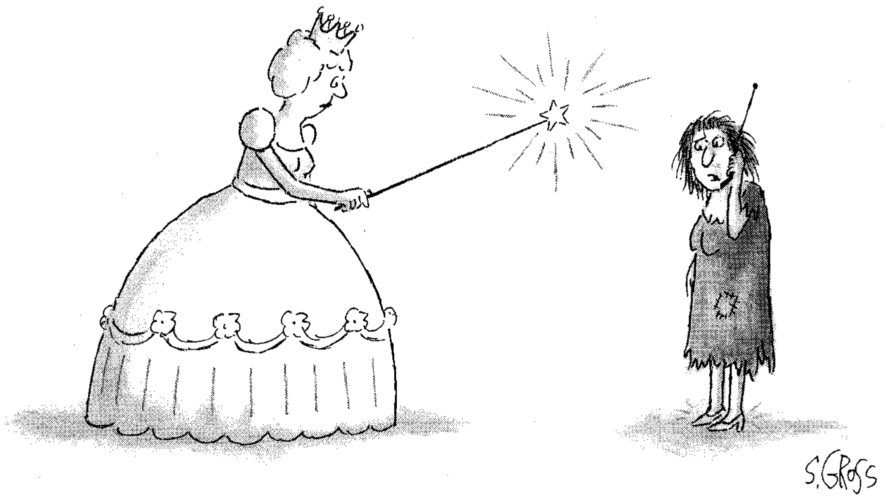
In a 1976 essay, the philosophers Samuel Gorovitz and Alasdair MacIntyre explored the nature of fallibility. Why would a meteorologist, say, fail to correctly predict where a hurricane was going to make landfall? They saw three possible reasons. One was ignorance: perhaps science affords only a limited understanding of how hurricanes behave. A second reason was ineptitude: the knowledge is available, but the weatherman fails to apply it correctly. Both of these are surmountable sources of error. We believe that science will overcome ignorance, and that training and technology will overcome ineptitude. The third possible cause of error the philosophers posited, however, was an insurmountable kind, one they termed "necessary fallibility."

There may be some kinds of knowledge that science and technology will never deliver, Gorovitz and MacIntyre argued. When we ask science to move beyond explaining how things (say, hurricanes) generally behave to predicting exactly how a particular thing (say, Thursday's storm off the South Carolina coast) will behave, we may be asking it to do more than it can. No hurricane is quite like any other hurricane. Although all hurricanes follow predictable laws of behavior, each one is continuously shaped by myriad uncontrollable, accidental factors in the environment. To say precisely how one specific hurricane will behave would require a complete understanding of the world in all its particulars—in other words, omniscience.

It's not that it's impossible to predict anything; plenty of things are completely predictable. Gorovitz and MacIntyre give the example of a random ice cube in a fire. Ice cubes are so simple and so alike that you can predict with complete assurance that an ice cube will melt. But when it comes to inferring exactly what is going on in a particular person, are people more like ice cubes or like hurricanes?

Right now, at about midnight, I am seeing a patient in the emergency room, and I want to say that she is an ice cube. That is, I believe I can understand what's going on with her, that I can discern all her relevant properties. I believe I can help her.

Charlotte Duveen, as we will call



"I'll call you back. I'm in the middle of a make-over."

her, is forty-nine years old, and for two days she has had abdominal pain. I began observing her from the moment I walked through the curtains into her room. She was sitting cross-legged in the chair next to her stretcher and greeted me with a cheerful, tobacco-beaten voice. She did not look sick. No clutching the belly. No gasping for words. Her color was good—neither flushed nor pale. Her shoulder-length brown hair had been brushed, her red lipstick neatly applied.

She told me the pain had started out crampy, like a gas pain. But then, during the course of the day, it had become sharp and focussed, and as she said this she pointed to a spot on the lower right side of her abdomen. She had developed diarrhea. She constantly felt as if she had to urinate. She didn't have a fever. She was not nauseated. Actually, she was hungry. She told me that she had eaten a hot dog at Fenway Park two days ago, and she asked if that might have anything to do with this. She had also seen the birds at the zoo a few days earlier. She has two grown children. Her last period was three months ago. She smokes half a pack a day. She used to use heroin but said she's clean now. She once had hepatitis. She has never had surgery.

I felt her abdomen. It could be anything, I thought: food poisoning, a virus, appendicitis, a urinary-tract infection, an ovarian cyst, a pregnancy. Her abdomen was soft, without distension, and there was an area of particular tenderness in the lower right quadrant. When I pressed there, I felt her muscles harden reflexively beneath my fingers. On the pelvic exam, her ovaries felt normal. I ordered some lab tests. Her white-blood-cell count came back elevated. Her urinalysis was normal. A pregnancy test was negative. I ordered an abdominal CT scan.

I am sure I can figure out what's wrong with her, but, if you think about it, that's a curious faith. I have never seen this woman before in my life, and yet I presume that she is like the others I've examined. Is it true? None of my other patients, admittedly, were forty-nine-year-old women who had had hepatitis and a drug habit, had recently been to the zoo and eaten a Fenway frank, and had come in with two days of mild lower-right-quadrant pain. Yet I still believe. Every day, we take people to surgery and open their abdomens, and, broadly speaking, we know what we will find: not eels or tiny chattering machines or a pool of blue liquid but coils of bowel, a liver to one side, a stomach to the other, a bladder down below. There are, of course, differences—an adhesion in one patient, an infection in another—but we have catalogued and sorted them by the thousands, making a statistical profile of mankind.

I am leaning toward appendicitis. The pain is in the right place. The timing of her symptoms, her exam, and her white-blood-cell count all fit with what I've seen before. She's hungry, however; she's walking around, not looking sick, and this seems unusual. I go to the radiology reading room and stand in the dark, looking over the radiologist's shoulder at the images of Duveen's abdomen flashing up on the monitor. He points to the appendix, wormlike, thick, surrounded by gray, streaky fat. It's appendicitis, he says confidently. I call the attending surgeon on duty and tell him what we've found. "Book the O.R.," he says. We're going to do an appendectomy.

This one is as sure as we get. Yet I've worked on similar cases—with identical results from the CT scan—in which we opened the patient up and found a normal appendix. Surgery itself is a kind of autopsy. "Autopsy" literally means "to see for oneself," and, despite our knowledge and technology, when we look we're often unprepared for what we find. I want to think that my patient's condition is as predictable as the sun's rising, as the melting of an ice cube, and maybe I have to. But I've been around long enough to know that in human beings the simplest certainties can be dashed.

Whether with living patients or cadavers, we do not know until we look. Even in Mr. Sykes's case, I now wonder whether we put our stitches in correctly, or whether the bleeding had come from somewhere else entirely. Doctors are no longer asking these questions. And our arrogance only deepens. In 1995, the National Center for Health Statistics stopped collecting autopsy statistics altogether. We can no longer even say how rare autopsies have become. ♦

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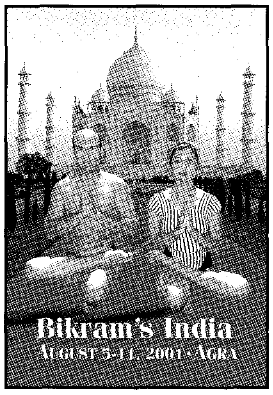

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ANNALS OF STYLE

THE MAD MUSE OF WATERLOO

She's worn lobsters, armor, and horsehair, and she's become a major force in British fashion.

BY LARISSA MACFARQUHAR

Isabella Blow was appointed the fashion director of *Style*, the London *Sunday Times* magazine, in 1997, but for several years the paper's editor avoided meeting her. "He was terrified," Jeremy Langmead, then *Style's* editor, says. "I kept telling him, 'You really ought to meet the fashion director,' and he'd say, 'No, no, it's fine. I'll say hello another time.' He'd seen her at a distance. You couldn't not." The editor wasn't the only one to find her unnerving. "When she first started," Langmead says, "I used to make her go a really long way around to her office, so everyone would see her and I could monitor their reactions. She didn't notice a thing. She thinks she looks quite normal."

Isabella Blow is very small, but she produces the effect of a large and bewildering piece of public art. This is because she looks like a piece of public art. She has worn on her head, for instance, the crystal-encrusted shell of a real lobster (made into a hat by the accessory designer Erik Halley); she has worn armor. She has worn, as an accessory, a heavy chain that hung from her neck to the floor and (famously) left oily streaks on the designer Karl Lagerfeld's carpet. To come upon Isabella walking down a street is to experience a little world-deforming jolt of aesthetic shock, which engenders bafflement or joy, depending. "I just adore her," the shoe designer Manolo Blahnik says. "I see her and I get ideas. Years ago, I was in Paris, and I saw her wearing a huge metal gauntlet with a Poiret kind of long dress, very modern. It was Joan of Arc going to the shops." Emma Soames, who was once Isabella's boss at *Tatler*, says, "Sometimes I get it and sometimes I don't. But that's all right—I don't think I'm supposed to get it. Heavens, the room is big enough for everybody."

Isabella is famous for her eye. She discovers designers while they are still in school, and champions them until the world agrees that their clothes are beautiful. She discovered Alexander McQueen; she discovered Philip Treacy; she discovered Julien Macdonald and Tristan Webber. She discovered Sophie Dahl, the granddaughter of Roald Dahl, who is now one of the best-known models in the world—known for being significantly heavier than the average model—on the street, when Dahl was eighteen.

"I had had a big fight with my mother, and I was standing by a parking meter smoking a cigarette and weeping," Dahl says. "A taxi pulled up and this extraordinary vision got out wearing an enormous hat, see-through trousers, and a bustier, carrying hundreds of bags, and talking on a mobile phone. I thought, I've got to be that woman's friend. She was struggling with her bags, so I said, 'Can I help you?' "

"I saw this great big blowup doll with enormous bosoms," Isabella says. "I just could not believe the size of her bosoms. The voice was gentle. The skin—milky white. She said, 'Can I help you?' Now, I adore good manners. Absolutely love them. So I said, 'Actually you could. But what's the matter? You're crying.' "

"I said, 'I've had a terrible fight with my mother about my future and I don't know what I'm going to do.' She said, 'Well, do you want to be a model?' I said, 'Yes, please.' So we went and found my mother, and Issie said, 'I'm going to make your daughter into a model,' and Mummy said, 'Hmm, O.K.,' and we went back to Issie's house and toasted our meeting with a glass of champagne. Then she dressed me up in her clothes, and we went out to dinner. It was like being a character in 'Alice in Wonderland.' "

Many people find Isabella alarming or ridiculous, but her job has given her considerable clout in the fashion business, and has compelled even her detractors to take her seriously. Her authority is, in part, a matter of numbers: she commissions more than forty fashion shoots a year for the magazine, and for each she selects a set of clothes that will be seen by nearly two million people. (British *Vogue*, by comparison, comes out once a month and has a circulation of two hundred thousand.) "Going mass-market is fun," she says. "Karl Lagerfeld used to say I was crazy, and then, when I got the job at the *Sunday Times*, he was charming. Great big loads of flowers." Isabella, in turn, has supplied the *Sunday Times* with avant-garde credentials that it had rather noticeably lacked: its image was so stuffy that some designers would refuse to lend their designs to the magazine for shoots. "She raised the magazine's profile straightaway," Langmead says. "Whenever she goes to a show, it's 'Oh, look, there's Isabella Blow with the *Sunday Times*.' "

One afternoon at five o'clock, in the middle of London Fashion Week, Isabella was rushing about in her house in South London, looking like a pair of scissors, with her little head nodding, her legs on pointy heels running, and a blur of cloth flapping in between. It was going to be a harried evening: Tristan Webber and Alexander McQueen were putting on shows, back to back. The Webber show was scheduled to begin at six-thirty, but Isabella had received an inside tip that it would start at least an hour late, so she was using the time to inspect the latest offerings of another protégé, Maurizio Anzeri. Maurizio, an ursine Italian clothing designer who works in hair and whose current ambition is to create a wig for the top of the new Tate gallery, was crouching on the floor of the living room, lovingly unwrapping a coat.

Isabella and her husband, Detmar

Isabella Blow in a dress by Alexander McQueen and a Philip Treacy hat. Photograph by François-Marie Banier.

"Great design, but, when the time comes, a bitch to implode."

• •

Blow, an art dealer, live in an old artisan's cottage on a small street in Waterloo. The house is so tiny and low-ceilinged that its four parts seem more display cases than rooms, and this is how they have been treated by Isabella and Detmar. The living room, for instance, has no furniture—only, above the fireplace, a large, protruding sculpture that looks like a melting Rubik's Cube. Isabella is awaiting the arrival of a sofa that is being created for her by two friends in Switzerland out of orange-and-silver snakeskin, will be slipcovered in shaved mink, and will involve, in a way that Isabella finds difficult to describe, a hump resembling that of a water buffalo.

Isabella marched in from the dining room wearing a new hat that Philip Treacy had made for her, consisting of several thin, blood-colored feathers that curved in elegant horizontal lines in front of her face, so that she appeared to be looking out from behind the bars of a coyly fragile cage.

"Maurizio," she said, "can you put the coat on me for a minute so we can see whether it goes with the hat?"

Maurizio lifted the coat, made entirely out of gray horsehair, from the floor and helped her into it. The horsehair stood up around Isabella's neck in a stiff collar and descended to the knee in thick bundles, bound in the middle and stitched together in rows. She looked as though she'd been packed for shipping. She picked up the red horsehair bag that went with the coat and strode back into the other room to assess the combination of hat, coat, and bag in the mirror. Her heavy-lidded, pale eyes met their reflection in the glass. The answer was immediately obvious: no.

This time, the solution came easily, but Isabella's encounters with the mirror are often confrontational. For one thing, she finds her face ugly: she can't stand, in particular, her slightly bucked front teeth, which she calls her combine harvesters. (The teeth are, in fact, rather alluring, seeming always to be poised between a kiss and a bite.) But, more than that, she finds the mirror difficult because the mirror stage—the curatorial stage—is the moment of selection and refusal. Clothes must be worn in combination, so it is not enough, as it is in other forms of art, to love each thing by itself. Of every outfit the question must be asked: Is it, in the end, too much? Embrace comes more naturally to Isabella than rejection, but she knows what a narrow path winds between the tedium of convention and the exorbitance of kitsch. After all, nowadays the minimalist orthodoxy is such that any appendage—even so much as a button or a shirt cuff—registers to the fashionable eye as an accessory.

Because she is a creature of passionate enthusiasms, and because she is willing, in the service of those enthusiasms, to make a spectacle of herself, Isabella is perpetually at risk of falling into camp. She dreads that fate. She dreads becoming some mad, excessive, tragic gay icon. She aspires to elegance: her fashion heroine is the Duchess of Windsor. She doesn't want to be theatrical; she wants to be sexy, and she knows, when it comes to clothes, how conservative heterosexuality can be. She worries that she has been taking too much fashion advice from queens, who always want to pile more things on her, and not enough from straight men, who want to take her things off. Now in her early forties, she is learning to pare herself down. "I used to shove on the kitchen sink," she says ruefully. "And then I realized it wasn't about the kitchen sink."

The most pressing question on Isabella's mind for the moment was what to wear that night. She was planning to wear Webber to the Webber show, and then she would rush back home and change into McQueen for the McQueen show, so that neither would be offended. For the Webber part of the evening, she had selected a pair of white linen trousers that extended into large flaps behind the legs, and a close-fitting white leather jacket, dotted with puffs of white fox fur. Her face was done: she had coated her eyelids with a thick layer of silver glitter, and to their edges had affixed a pair of false eyelashes, lined along the lid with a row of real diamonds. It was the accessories that were causing her trouble. Should she wear the white wave hat that Philip Treacy had made for her? The hat was exquisite, but might it not be *de trop* when paired with the white leather and the fur? Too many feathers and puffs and things going on and she would look like a transvestite. Isabella lifted up the hat from the table, walked over to the mirror, and fitted it carefully onto her head. The hat was crafted out of a thin headband of black wire, into one side of which had been set five long white feathers that had been made to curve like waves, overlapping in delicate arcs and extending horizontally outward, away from her face. Isabella shifted her short, soft brown hair about with her fingers so that it covered the headband. (The last time she wore this hat, someone, not seeing the wire, asked if she'd had the feathers drilled into the side of her head.) She backed away from the mirror and studied herself for a moment in silence.

Should she wear a hat at all? This was the real question. She had, of course, become famous for her hats. People expected her to wear them—for years she had scarcely been seen outside the bedroom with a bare head. But was she becoming a caricature of herself? Isabella frowned into the mirror. The ceiling light glanced off the diamonds on her eyelids. "It's too much," she declared at last, out loud. She pried the headband off her head and put the hat back on the table. She resolved to wear a six-inch silver nail in her ear instead.

"Taxi's here," Chloë Beeney, her assistant, called from the door.

Barely an hour later, after the Webber show (disappointing), Isabella was in another taxi, racing back to Waterloo. She sat down to gobble some dinner and have a cigarette. The phone rang. It was one of McQueen's assistants calling, in a panic because the show was supposed to start in three minutes and Isabella wasn't there.

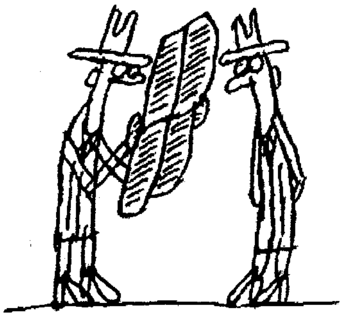
"But you said it wouldn't start until nine-fifteen!" Isabella cried into the phone through a mouthful of hummus, greatly distressed. She hated being late, and she knew that McQueen would be hysterical if she missed his show.

The show was to take place in a disused bus depot in Victoria. Inside, bleachers had been arranged around a large glass cube. Strong lights were turned on inside the cube so that the audience could see in. Something loud and fast and industrial started playing. A model appeared in a corner, her head tightly bound with white bandages. She wore a wide, long skirt made out of mussel shells, and she stumbled about inside the cube in an odd, aimless way. Suddenly, she started smashing the shells and ripping them off the skirt as though in a great rage. Breaking character for a moment, she began to giggle, but she soon recovered and recommenced smashing shells, scattering them about the floor. The theme of the show, it emerged, was Insane Asylum. Isabella was transfixed.

"Oooh, sexy!" she breathed, and started dancing in her seat to the music. More models walked into the cube, one wearing a large wooden castle on her shoulder, one in a dress that bulged out in front like a distended belly, covered in bright-green feathers.

"Ha-ha!" Isabella cried out in delight. "*He* hasn't been tainted by marketing!" After the show, Isabella forced her way through the crowd and found McQueen in the big dressing room backstage. "So beautiful! So elegant! Fucking hell!" she said, and gave him a hug. She spotted McQueen's mother and went over to say hello. She lit a cigarette and narrowly avoided setting her hat on fire (she is always setting her hats on fire). Gwyneth Paltrow and Kate Moss stood together on one side of the room and Grace Jones appeared on the other, but all the photographers made straight for Isabella. Photographers always make straight for Isabella. They may not know who she is, but they can see that, in a fashion crowd, she is a toucan among crows.

McQueen is the protégé Isabella is known for. She discovered him in 1992, when he was still in art school, and she promoted him when universal opinion held that he was an irretrievable weirdo. This was when he was making trousers that bared most of the bottom. "I bought almost all of his first collection," Isabella says. "It took me two years to pay for it. I loved his clothes, and I wore them to death. Literally to death. I wore them in cars, I got them torn, I wore them during the day, I wore them at night, I wore them the way he wants people to wear them." McQueen came from East London; he was fat and rough and had a Cockney accent. He frightened people. "When I first met him, they wouldn't allow him into the *Vogue* office," Isabella says. "His teeth looked like Stonehenge." She mothered McQueen for years, and they grew very close. She was crazy about him and found him incredibly sexy and told him so. And yet when McQueen finally hit the big time—when, four years ago, he was hired to be the head designer at Givenchy and given an atelier in Paris—he didn't ask her to come with him.



"I was devastated," she says. "The other day, I got drunk and plucked up the courage to ask him, 'Why didn't you take me?' And he said, 'Because you're with so many other people.' " Isabella doesn't believe that this is his real reason. She has spent many miserable hours speculating about his real reason. "I understand," she says. "He loves me, but he can't work with me. It's blood, sweat, and tears with us, because we're both really angry people and we both feel we've had a hard time. I think we would have made each other very, very ill. But the other day he rang me up and said, 'I've missed you, I love you.' He knows that I'm absolutely obsessed by him."

McQueen does acknowledge Isabella, in his way. "Course," he says, when asked if she has influenced him. "She's like a disease. A terminal disease. Everything she does rubs off on you."

Isabella's relationships with her protégés, though (or because) they are passionate, are always fraught with anxiety, and are tainted by her conviction that, eventually—inevitably—she will be betrayed. Her friendship with Philip Treacy is much less stormy than her friendship with McQueen, and she has worn hats all these years in part out of loyalty to him. ("If I hadn't met Isabella, my hats would look different," Treacy says. "When Isabella's in your world, you just don't want to disappoint her.") But even Treacy has let her down. "In the Thames and Hudson book on hats, I'm not even mentioned," she fumes. "Boy George is there and not me. I resent it, really a lot. I asked Philip about it. I said, 'Why aren't I in the hat book? Why aren't I in your press releases?' No explanation. I might as well not even exist."

For years, Isabella toiled on behalf of her protégés without remuneration: she did it for love. Recently, though, she has begun to feel that she is being taken advantage of. So she appreciated it when one of her newer finds, Jeremy Scott, took a more businesslike approach to their relationship (she attributes this to his being American). He told her, "You go out in my clothes, baby, you'll get paid for it. Don't do anything without being paid." (He pays her in kind.) A couple of years ago, moreover, she stumbled upon an indirect way to be paid for her relationships: she became a consultant to Swarovski, the crystal manufacturer.

She met Helmut Swarovski in 1997, at a lunch at Princess Michael of Kent's country house. Swarovski's company was an old-fashioned, meat-and-potatoes, Austrian sort of operation: its salespeople travelled to customers carrying crystals in suitcases, like Tupperware. The company was known for producing the small crystal animals sold in airport gift shops, so Helmut Swarovski was charmed when Isabella began rhapsodizing about the company's glamorous past—about the days, in the nineteen-forties and fifties, when Dior and Schiaparelli made seasonal visits to Austria and incorporated crystals into their designs. Isabella became captivated by the idea of making Swarovski chic again. She also saw an opportunity to put her protégés in contact with a company whose annual turnover was probably several billion dollars. A few days later, Isabella sent Swarovski, unsolicited, a dress by Julien Macdonald made out of lime-green plastic with crystals sewn on. Swarovski introduced Isabella to his twenty-seven-year-old daughter, Nadja.

Nadja had worked in the company's crystal-animal division in New York, and felt alienated from her product. She wanted to reëstablish Swarovski's connections to fashion, but she hadn't the contacts. Swarovski executives felt it would be a mistake to hire such a bizarre spokesperson (Isabella had shown up for a meeting wearing her crystal-encrusted-lobster hat, by way of illustrating Swarovski's fashion potential), but Nadja pulled rank and persuaded her father to take Isabella on. "The point was, they didn't know anybody," Isabella says. "They're out in Toblerone country. They were sponsoring the wrong events with the wrong people. But I told them what to do, and they did it." She introduced them to Alexander McQueen; McQueen loved the crystals and started sewing them onto his clothes, and many followed his lead. She persuaded the Swarovskis to sponsor outré young designers. She introduced them to Liza Lou, the California artist who makes large sculptures of domestic scenes out of glass beads. She put them in touch with her agent in Brazil, and they sold a million crystals in one telephone call. Since Isabella began working for them, the sales of their jewel stones have gone, as Nadja puts it, "through the roof." According to Nadja, the executives who were initially so wary now regard Isabella with an affection that is wonderful to see. "They used to call me an extreme eccentric," Isabella says dryly, "but then the cash started rolling in."

"I met Issie at a wedding," Detmar says. "She was wearing a huge ostrich-feather hat, and I was wearing a Teddy coat. I went up to her and said, 'I love your hat,' and she said, 'I love your coat,' and then she said, in a soft, light voice, 'I wish I was wearing my violet shoes for you, but I've left them behind because it's muddy'—so unlike Issie—and we fell in love. I met her on September 24, 1988, and we were engaged sixteen days later. She lived fifty yards away from me, just by coincidence."

"I was living with Maggie the Cat," Isabella says. "You know, Maria St. Just, the muse of Tennessee Williams. A romantic house, like a theatre set. Incredible bamboo pelmets."

"Vanessa Redgrave was staying there as well, next door to Issie's bedroom, and Issie says she used to rehearse 'Orpheus Descending' all night, until three or four in the morning."

"I heard her clapping and screaming and doing her lines. She'd clap all night. And, you know, I never saw her."

"What dedication."

Isabella and Detmar were married in 1989, in Gloucester Cathedral. Isabella wore a hat of a gold curvy design that fitted to her head like a swimming cap, and a purple velvet dress cut in the fashion of the thirteenth century.

"The dress was quite conventional for Issie," Detmar says.

Isabella sighs. "It was quite conventional."

Isabella is always remarking on how much Detmar loves to eat, and how he looks like a little cherub, and there is something sweetly sleek and soft about him, with his olive skin and smooth black curls: he has the air of a beloved cat. Detmar used to be a barrister, but it is difficult to imagine him in court. He speaks with that ruling-class English accent that is called plummy, because it sounds as though the speaker had a mouthful of plums, but he speaks so extraordinarily quickly that he sounds, rather, as though he had a mouthful of ball bearings. Recently, Detmar has begun to take almost as great an interest

SALESMANSHIP, WITH HALF A DRAM OF TEARS

Gripping the lectern, rocking it, searching
the faces for the souls, for signs of heartfelt
mindfulness at work, I thought, as I recited
words I wrote in tears: instead of tears,
if I had understood my father's business,
I could be selling men's clothes. I could be
kneeling, complimenting someone at the bay
of mirrors, mumblingly, with pinpoints pressed
between my lips. That was the life I held
in scorn while young, because I thought to live
without distraction, using words. Yet, looking
now into the room of strangers' eyes, I wanted
them to feel what I said touch, as palpably
as when a man in double worsted felt
the cuff drop to his wrist. There was a rush
in the applause of gratitude and mercy:
they could go. A teen-ager, embarrassed
for himself and me, left-handedly
squeezed my fingers, and said thanks.

—*Brooks Haxton*

in his wardrobe as Isabella takes in hers. Not long ago, he attended a party, given by Princess Michael of Kent, wearing a hat by Maurizio that consisted of six or seven thick, white hair braids that hung down to his chin, some in front of his face, from a tall white peak at the top of his head. Isabella is ambivalent about this new development. "It's rather frightening," she says. "I don't know if he's turning into a girl or what." She worries, too, that she and Detmar might be turning into the Duke and Duchess of Windsor: she feels there might be some unhappy connection between an overdeveloped interest in clothes and being infertile (Isabella and Detmar cannot have children). "The Duke and Duchess were like two little toys," she says sadly. "They never had any children, so they just dressed each other all the time."

Isabella likes to say that Detmar married her because she went with his house. Detmar's house, Hilles, in the Cotswolds, is an Arts and Crafts, faux-Elizabethan manor that his grandfather, an architect also named Detmar Blow, built just before the First World War. Blow was a disciple of John Ruskin and William Morris. He decorated the interior of the house like a medieval castle, with tapestries, ancestor portraits, and pictures of kings and queens. Detmar's father used to ride around the estate wearing a suit of armor.

"It's a fantasy world," Detmar says. "Very dreamy, very pensive and theatrical."

"It's like Madame Tussaud's," Isabella says. "My father described Hilles as Wuthering Heights on a withering budget. Detmar was livid."

Isabella and Detmar take the train up to Hilles on weekends, and throw house parties at which they like to bring together people who wouldn't otherwise meet. "One time, McQueen was up there," Isabella says, "and I introduced him to Princess Michael. His dog did a massive poo in the corner, and I said, 'Ma'am, I'm so sorry about that poo.' Alexander said that his dog hadn't liked her and did the poo on purpose. But Alexander secretly loved her."

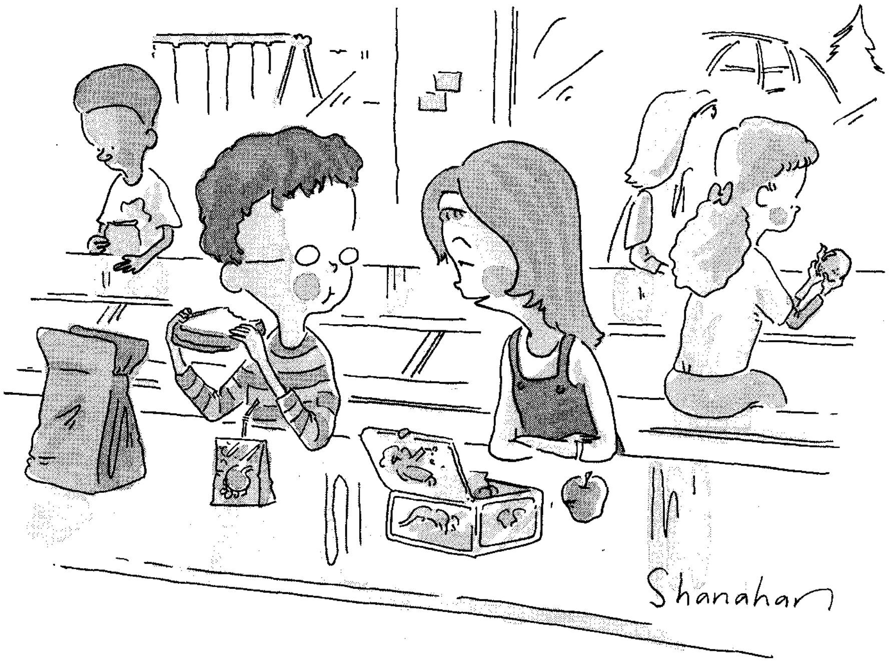
Isabella's family history is even more rococo than Detmar's. Her ancestors have lived in a castle in Cheshire since the fourteenth century. One ancestor, she says, fought at the battle of Poitiers and saved the life of the Black Prince; another sailed with Drake. When Isabella's grandfather Sir Jock Delves Broughton inherited the estate, on the death of his father, in 1914, the family still owned thirty-four thousand acres, attached to Doddington, the family seat in Cheshire, and to Broughton, in Staffordshire. After the First World War, though, the family declined. Delves Broughton gambled and sold off large parcels of the estate to pay his debts; his wife, Vera, left him and departed for Papua New Guinea to take photographs and collect ethnographic specimens for the British Museum with her lover, Lord Moyne. (She was a cannibal, Isabella loves to tell people: she once, unwittingly, tasted human flesh.) Delves Broughton later emigrated to the notoriously dissipated colonial community in Kenya, where, some years later, he was prosecuted for the murder of Lord Erroll, who had run off with his second wife, in the famous "white mischief" trial. He was acquitted but was socially exiled nonetheless, and eventually committed suicide.

It is hard to overestimate the extent to which Isabella's aesthetic sense has been affected by her family's gothic history. She is obsessed with violence of a medieval sort—with armor and the color of blood and rigid headpieces and battles. She reads a lot of history, and is haunted by certain figures, like Mary Queen of Scots. Her favorite books are "Les Liaisons Dangereuses" and "The Red and the Black." She has no love for novelty per se; for her, the new is exciting only when it is forced out of the old, already soiled with history and significance.

After her grandfather's suicide, Doddington stood unoccupied, because her father couldn't afford to keep it up. When Isabella was a child, her family lived, instead, in a small cottage overlooking the estate. "I had beauty at a distance," she says. "That was the frustrating thing. I was brought up in a horrible little pink house that Detmar never stops reminding me of. My father used to buy paintings from drugstores. Women weaving baskets. Noah's ark. It was really bad. I think that's where my intensity comes from—because I realized that everything was very ugly around me and I hated where I was living."

When Isabella was in her early teens, her father met a younger woman on a bus in Hong Kong, and left his wife. Not close to either of her parents, Isabella moved to New York a few years later to attend college at Columbia. After a year, though, a friend of hers was stabbed on campus and, her nerves shattered, she dropped out. She worked at American *Vogue*, *Tatler*, and British *Vogue*.

When her father died, eight years ago, Isabella discovered that he had disinherited her, leaving the Delves Brough-



"I love a man with an untrimmed crust."

ton estate to his new family. Isabella recently drew up her own will, and in it she included a provision that her head be chopped off and delivered to her father in his vault, to symbolize the way he cut her off. Her heart is to be cut out, placed in a heart-shaped box, and sent to Detmar. She has already begun looking for a surgeon who will pledge to carry out this mission, and she wants to be sure that all the arrangements are made and paid for before her demise, so that Detmar isn't left with a big bill.

Isabella is very conscious of bills, because all her life she has been plagued by money problems. She used to travel to the couture shows on the tube. She is sympathetic to the cash-flow difficulties of others: when the actor Rupert Everett was broke in the early eighties and Isabella was working at *Vogue* (she's known him since they were both teen-agers), she got him modelling jobs and used to send company cars to meet him at the airport. Now, however, things are looking up. In addition to her arrangement with Swarovski, she has been hired by Max Factor as a prophet of visual trends. So far, the company credits her with anticipating a renewed interest in volume (puffy sleeves and full lips), a vogue for denaturalized floral patterns, and a mania for the sea (blues are back in makeup, and coral and shells kept turning up in the spring collections). "She feels trends in the ether, as it were," Annabelle Manwaring, Max Factor's global creative director, says. "She's made us feel more right. You can be wrong, you know." Though thriftiness has been thrust upon her, Isabella adores extravagance. Once, for a short, glorious period, Detmar hired a butler to work at Hilles, as a present to Isabella. The butler had previously worked for Bing Crosby and the Prince and Princess of Wales. "God, it was glamorous," Isabella says. "I love staff, I'm afraid. I feel quite nouveau riche about it. Oooh, it takes the sting out of everything."

A month after London Fashion Week, Isabella travelled to Los Angeles. She had never been there before, partly because she has a horror of jet lag, and partly because she feels that L.A. is tacky and lacks history. She adores old Hollywood—once, sending a fax to the clothing designer Valentino, she addressed it, instinctively, "Dear Rudolph"—but she was worried that old Hollywood had disappeared. She was finally persuaded to go because Jeremy Scott was putting on a show there—the first L.A. fashion show ever, as far as she knew—and because she had persuaded Swarovski to pay for her trip.

She found the show, at the Pacific Design Center, rather peculiar, attended, as it was, not by fashion types but by a strange collection of famous people—Courtney Love, Monica Lewinsky, Farrah Fawcett, Vidal Sassoon. She did, however, love the bathing suits that she saw on the runway. The Saturday after the show, she wore one of them to a Halloween party at the Playboy Mansion—a striped one in aqua and white, bisected vertically by a large, circular, scallop-edged flap held aloft by wires, in which attire she resembled a giant clam on the half shell. She was extremely offended, however, when people at the party took her to be in costume. Whenever she was asked what she was supposed to be, she would snap, "This is not a costume, it's fashion!" and storm away.

The Monday following the party, Isabella was to style a story for the *Sunday Times* with a friend of hers, the photographer David LaChapelle. Each year, she styles two or three photo shoots herself (for the rest she hires stylists), and this means that, in addition to selecting the clothes, she goes to the shoot in order to supervise the combination of the clothes with each other and with the props and the setting.

LaChapelle is a great fan of kitsch, artifice, and absurdity, and, while Isabella is a great fan of LaChapelle's, she had nonetheless made it her mission for the shoot to restrain his campier tendencies and to fly, as she saw it, the straight person's standard of beauty, realness, and sex. The shoot was to take place outside the Hollywood Wax Museum, with two models, Shirley and Lisa Marie, wearing Jeremy Scott bathing suits and voguing in front of a mural of the Hollywood sign.

"*Vamos, vamos!*" Isabella cried, clapping her tiny hands and hustling the models down the steps of the trailer. "Out, out, out!"

On a shoot, Isabella doesn't modify her wardrobe (she was wearing, that day, blue glitter sunglasses in the shape of a

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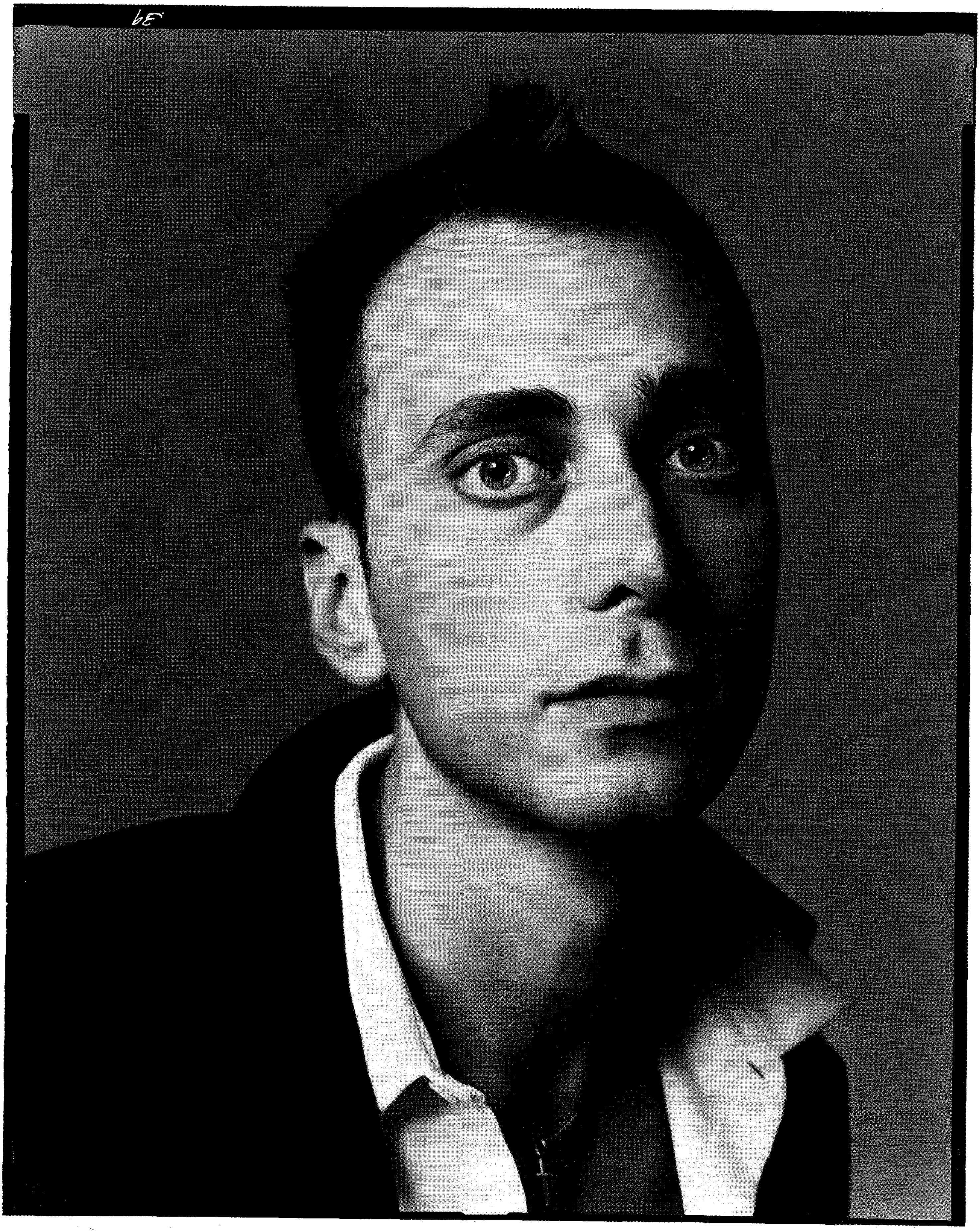
SHOWCASE BY
RICHARD AVEDON

DIOR'S NEW LOOK

Men's ready-to-wear has always exercised less control over the fashion imagination than women's has, generally because its creation lacks the invention and deep-dish drama that continue to be the invisible weapons in the war for the female form. But, in recent months, the haughty sheen of the girls on the runway has also been visible on the boys wearing the clothes of the new designer for Dior Homme, Hedi Slimane. Since Slimane introduced his line this January, in the ateliers where exquisitely manicured assistants and stressed-out designers drink Diet Coke and chain-smoke Marlboro Lights through the night, it's been all about Hedi.

Until last year, Slimane was over at Yves Saint Laurent, where he designed the menswear line. Like the Algerian-born Saint Laurent, he was not exactly French—his father is Tunisian, his mother Italian—yet he had the uncanny knack of knowing how to make the French look like their image of themselves. But when the American designer Tom Ford was brought in to reinvent YSL's ready-to-wear for women—well, it was only a matter of time before Slimane struck out on his own and was snatched up by his former company's rival.

Slimane is known for making clothes with razor-sharp shoulder lines, an androgynous silhouette that brings to mind existential gangsters and glamorous molls combined. He has no formal training in design, but the maturity of his expression may have something to do with his having already survived, at the age of thirty-two, the rough and tumble of the fashion wars.



Hedi Slimane, photographed in New York City, February 17, 2001.

lightning bolt), but she becomes very brisk and professional. LaChapelle set up the shot, and a small crowd of tourists stopped on the sidewalk to watch.

"Fred, get me those tourists," LaChapelle ordered his producer, liking the way they looked. He decided he wanted the tourists to be in a frenzy, as though driven to madness by the beauty and fame of the models. "Scream!" he yelled at them. "Aaaaaaahhhh!" he screamed, by way of illustration. LaChapelle is big and wears his hair in a mullet. He screams with conviction.

"Ahh," the tourists tentatively called back.

"More!" he roared. "Go crazy! Jump up and down! Wave your cameras! Marie, take your top off! Throw your panties at them!" Marie—Marie du Petit Thouars, a young French countess known for her love of a good party—was Isabella's stylist that day. Shirley was voguing in a particularly athletic manner, and her nipples kept popping out of her bathing suit. Isabella, mindful of the *Sunday Times'* no-nipple rule, kept rushing over to push them back in.

For the second shoot, in the afternoon, Lisa Marie was wearing a see-through Paco Rabanne minidress made out of tiny circles and squares of clear plastic, with a foot-long crystal lobster around her neck that had been designed by Erik Halley and was worth, according to Isabella, either twenty thousand dollars or twenty thousand pounds.

"That lobster!" Paul, the makeup artist, said, wide-eyed, catching sight of it. "It's amazing."

"Every queen loves a lobster," said Isabella complacently.

The shoot was held up for forty-five minutes while everyone waited for the Michael Jackson impersonator to arrive. Meanwhile, Isabella and LaChapelle were in the trailer having a fight over shoes, which was really a fight over whether fashion was about cartoonish fantasy or about the erotic everyday. Earlier, Isabella had persuaded LaChapelle to leave the models' faces matte and human-looking, rather than shiny, like mannequins', which was more his style. But now LaChapelle was insisting that the model wear a pair of plastic platform sandals instead of the white stiletto pumps that Isabella had selected.

"White brings the lobster out," Isabella observed, feeling that this would be her strongest line of argument.

"I hate the leather with the Lucite," complained LaChapelle, slouching down on the trailer's padded bench.

"But the plain white is much more *fashion*. Baby, do you mind just standing over there so that David can see you?" Lisa Marie teetered to the far end of the trailer, visibly naked under her plastic dress, and posed kittenishly. She was nineteen years old and preferred the plastic sandals.

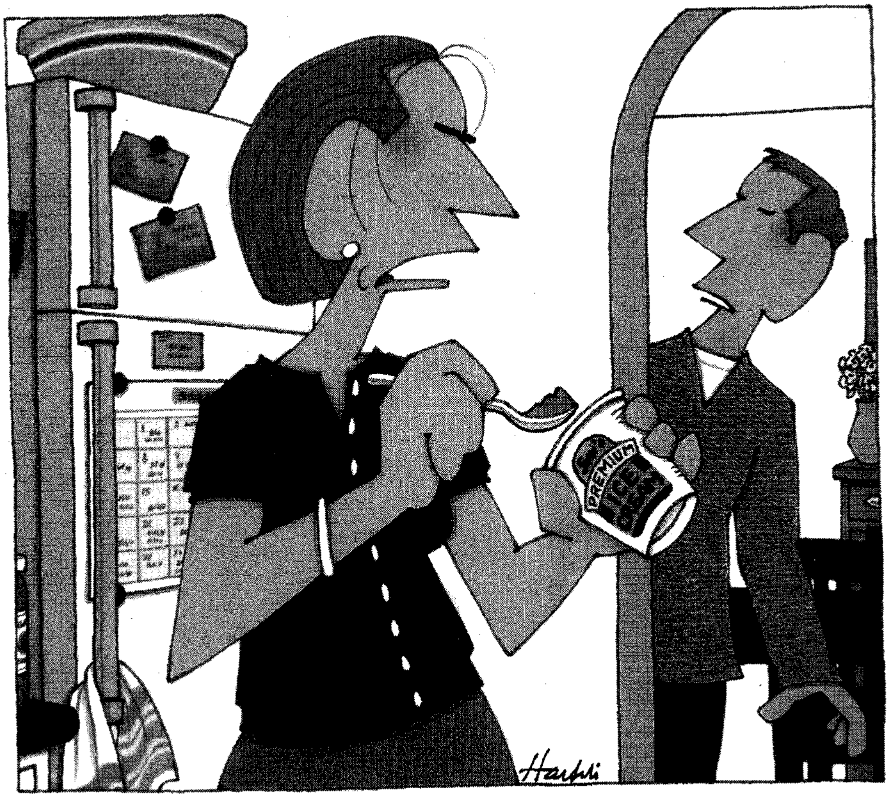
"See, she's got to look like she's just taking a stroll," Isabella said. "I don't want to do anything disco-retro."

The whole idea, in Isabella's opinion, was to make it look as though Lisa Marie had slipped into the dress casually, as someone might slip into a T-shirt. A see-through plastic dress worn as a costume was boring, but worn to dash out on an errand? Very sexy.

"I hate retro," LaChapelle said, defensively. "But that lobster is making it impossible to be retro."

The more Isabella looked at the plastic sandals, the more she detested them. She felt herself starting to get quite upset. She decided to try a new tack. She sat down on LaChapelle's lap and put her arms around him.

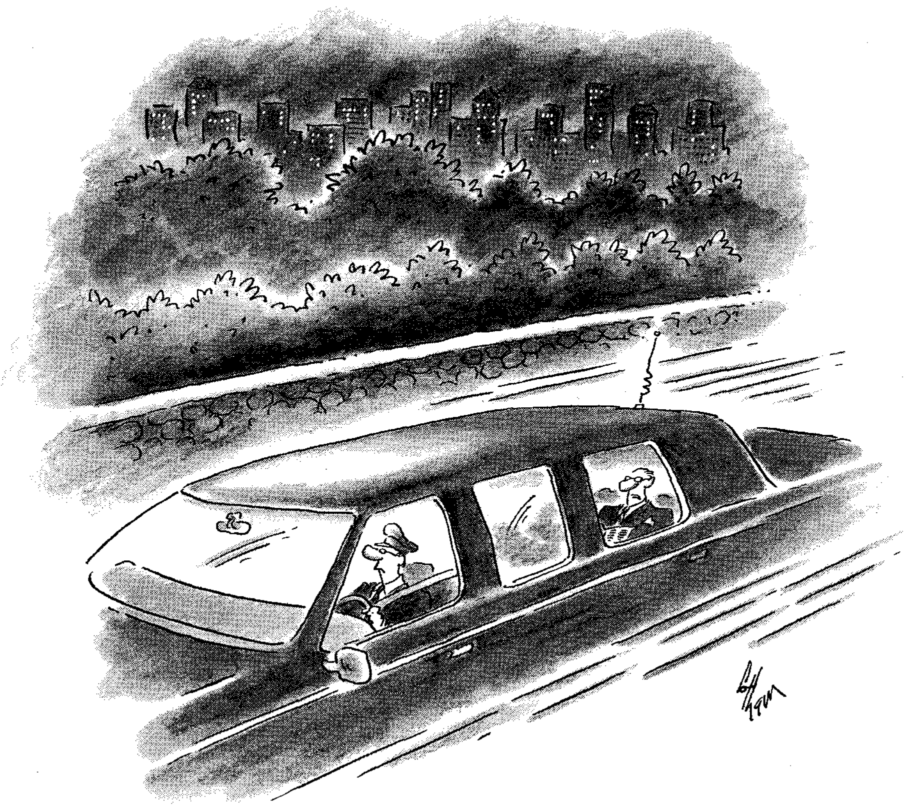
"Oh please, darling. I've come all this way." She kissed him tenderly on the cheek. "Let me have this one little thing. For love."



"I'm not eating. I'm self-medicating."

By the end of her trip to L.A., Isabella was worn out, her nerves frayed. "It's a strange feeling after you finish shooting," she says. "It's like nothing. It's like being in the desert. It's like stumbling around trying to find the loo." She felt drained not just as a result of her trip. In recent months, she has been disappointed by fashion. "I didn't see anything new in the collections," she says gloomily. "I just wasn't excited. L.V.M.H."—Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, the luxury-goods company that owns Givenchy—"is sucking up the talent. Now it's about doing a little bag, a little dress—nothing to make your heart go crazy. And I have to fall in love with the thing, because, without that love, what is the point of me running around and tearing myself to pieces?"

Recently, Isabella has begun to branch out from fashion and take a greater interest in art. She has been tangentially involved in the art world for some time. When she was living in New York, in her early twenties, she became friends with Andy Warhol: he spotted her at a party wearing one pink shoe and one purple shoe, and invited her to visit him at the Factory. A few years ago, Isabella and Detmar leased a tiny storefront art gallery in Shoreditch—an area in East London that has become something of an avant-garde gallery ghetto—called Modern Art. Detmar gave up his law practice to help run the business side of the enterprise, and he and Isabella hired a recent art-school graduate and sometime dealer, Stuart Shave, to recruit artists and negotiate with buyers. "When I met Stuart," Isabella says, "he was young and cute. He was living like 'Trainspotting.' You can't imagine. Baked beans stuck to the ceiling. Four hundred plates. But he had a very fine eye, an elegant eye, so I said to him, 'I have this friend called Wolfgang Joop; maybe he'll buy some art.' Stuart showed him a few slides and Wolfgang spent eighty thousand pounds in twenty minutes. So I said to Detmar, 'Why don't you back this boy?' "



"Please point out when we're passing a graveyard so that I can start whistling."

Stuart likes Isabella to come to the gallery openings; he advises her what to wear, so she will match the art. But now she wants to become more involved. "I don't like the idea of being a person who just shows up," she says. "It's a bit tacky. It's the sort of thing that rock stars do. I'm a working girl." She has spent so many years arranging clothing in contexts—in outfits, in shows, on shoots—that something about the hermetic self-reliance of a painting or a piece of sculpture appeals to her. "The whole point of my job is to make bad clothes look good," she says, "but with art it's just got to look good. You can't alter the thing: it's in front of you."

One day, back in London, Isabella decided to spend the morning visiting artists' studios with Detmar: a trip, as she optimistically proclaimed it, "to the future millionaires." First on her list was Ian Dawson, the sculptor who made the melted Rubik's Cube that hangs in the living room in Waterloo. Dawson occupies a small studio in Camberwell, and one of the reasons Isabella wanted to visit him was that she feared that the studio was insufficiently ventilated, and that Dawson, whose work involves melting plastic with a blowtorch, might be losing his mind. The room was crowded with bright-colored plastic, some still in its retail form (clothes hangers, buckets, laundry baskets), some melted into sculptures that looked like bulging, garish Pollock drip paintings, in which the colors seemed to twist and crawl over one another, as though being squeezed from a tube of paint. Isabella burst into applause.

"Beautiful!" she shouted, over her own clapping. "Is that meant to be a penis?" She bent to inspect one of the sculptures more closely. "It's a tongue, isn't it!"

"A tongue?" Dawson repeated, looking uncomfortable. He was quiet and shy.

Isabella laughed. "You've got to be very careful what you say to Ian," she commented to Detmar. "He's like a fairy in the mountains. He's very dedicated to his girlfriend. Damien Hirst is another story," she said, turning back to Dawson. "When I met Damien, ten or eleven years ago, I knew right away he was going to be the next Warhol. He was dirty and sexy and rude. I said, 'Hello, I'm Isabella,' and he said, 'Hello, you fucking cunt.' So I knew something was going on!"

Isabella lit a cigarette and strolled around the studio. She loved Dawson's work, and she had big plans for him. She would tell everyone about his sculptures, and she would try to think of people she knew who had the taste and the money to buy them. She was not an experienced critic, she knew, but she had faith in her eye. She had not spent painful hours in front of the mirror for nothing. This time, though, she wanted proper credit for her work.

"What have you noticed is the difference between us and your old gallery?" she asked Dawson. "We're more sexy, aren't we?"

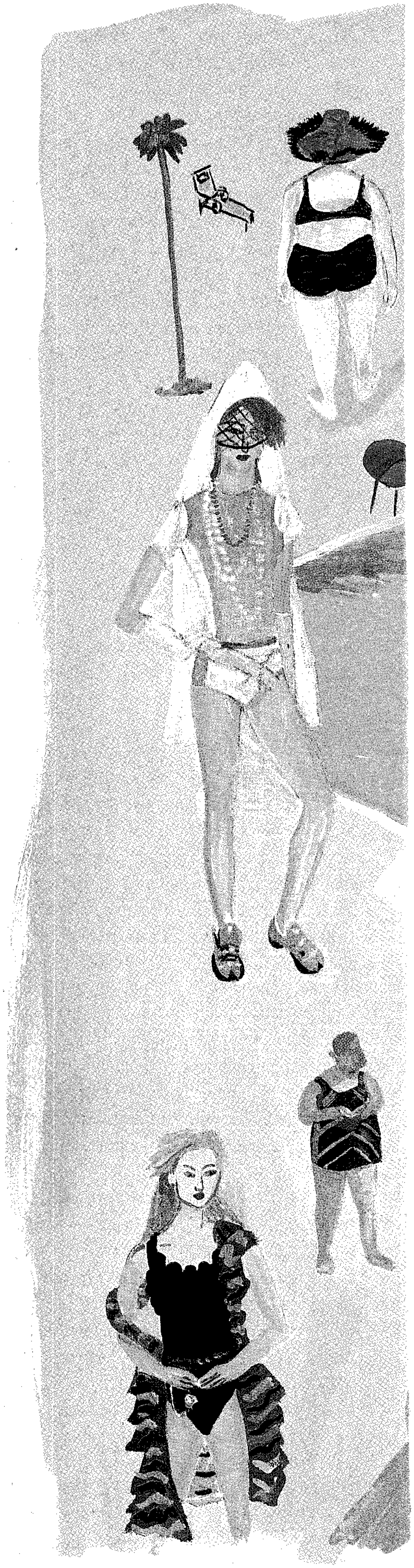
"Oh, yes," Dawson said, in his slow way. Isabella turned to Detmar with a triumphant smile.

"You see?" she said. "We're sexy. Stuart is very, very sexy, and I may be old, but I've still got some energy in the lower loins. Plus, I add something because I'm establishment. I can ring up Elton John and say, 'Come down in ten minutes,' and he'll be there." ♦

ODES TO SPRING

A portfolio of the season's trends.

BY JOHN SEABROOK



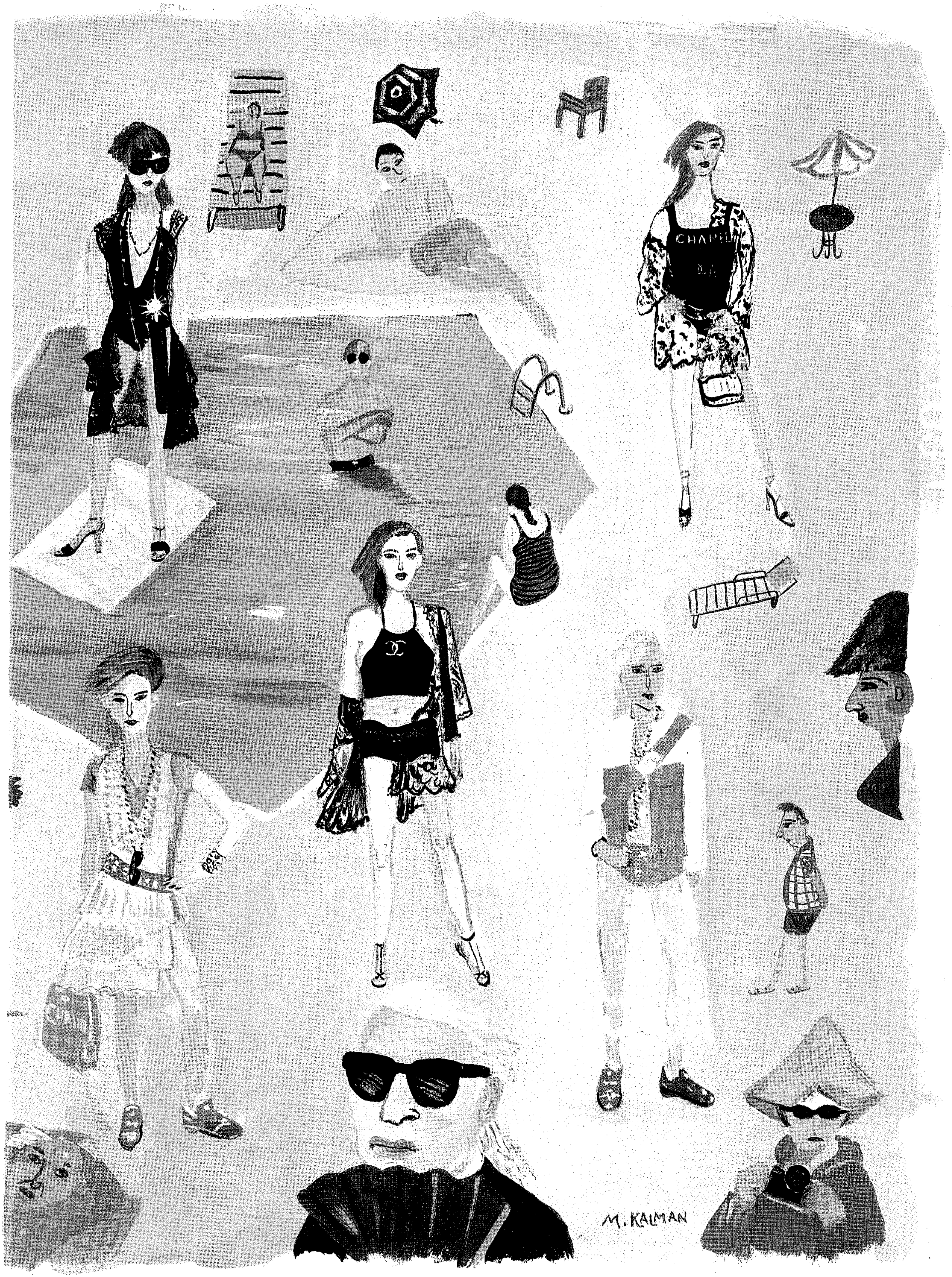
Chanel-sneakered girls in pearls and denim,
Innocence lacquered in female venom,
Glide down the runway as if to the pool,
Logos on key chains, cuffs, belts, and mules.
A white mesh skirt abloom with flowers
And black lace wraps for the evening hours,
All worn over black tulle bodysuits—
Couture and gymwear in strange cahoots.

Who but Lagerfeld would have had the nerve
To ransack the hope chest of Coco's œuvre
And show it as if he'd got something to prove
On a neon catwalk at the Carrousel du Louvre?
Meanwhile, the buyers murmur *J'adore!*
While wondering who these garments are for.
A nouveau Esther Williams? J. Lo? Ivana?
Some spoiled princess in a private cabana?

The designer himself, with ponytail sleek,
The sine qua non of Parisian chic,
Bows to his fans and basks in their cheers—
"It's Karl's most creative moment in years!"
The Kaiser, at least of the chattering classes,
Smiles from behind his fan and sunglasses.

ILLUSTRATION BY MAIRA KALMAN

Karl Lagerfeld's notion of Chanel athletic wear for summer includes layers of lace, pearls, chains, bags, and veils worn over the basic swimsuit.


CHANEL
CHANEL
M. KALMAN

THE FRONT LINE

DRILL SERGEANT: All right, ladies, drop your backpacks and grab your slingbacks! You are here to be *fashionable*. You are not here to be girlish, or pretty, or feminine. Do you ladies understand me?
FASHION RECRUITS: *Sir*, yes, *sir!*
DRILL SERGEANT: I can't hear you!
RECRUITS: *Sir*, yes, *sir!*
DRILL SERGEANT: What are you wearing, soldier?
FIRST WOMAN (*shouting*): *Sir*, satin military jacket, khaki cotton rip-stop skirt, and ballerina slippers with a kitten heel, all by Louis Vuitton, *sir!*
DRILL SERGEANT (*moving down the line*): How about you, soldier?
SECOND WOMAN: *Sir*, a camouflage dress by Christian Dior, *sir!*
THIRD WOMAN (*whispering*): Couldn't we just wear one of those little embroidered Chanel dresses with strappy sandals and a veil?
DRILL SERGEANT: Who said that? Who's the prissy little capitalist showoff who just signed her own death warrant?
THIRD WOMAN: *Sir*, I said it, *sir!*
DRILL SERGEANT: And what do you have on, maggot?
THIRD WOMAN: *Sir*, flesh-tone ribbed-cotton tank, green pleated skirt in washed-silk chiffon, and olive slingback loafers, by Miguel Adrover, *sir!*
DRILL SERGEANT: Then, God damn it, act like it, soldier! This is the military look!
THIRD WOMAN: *Sir*, yes, *sir!*

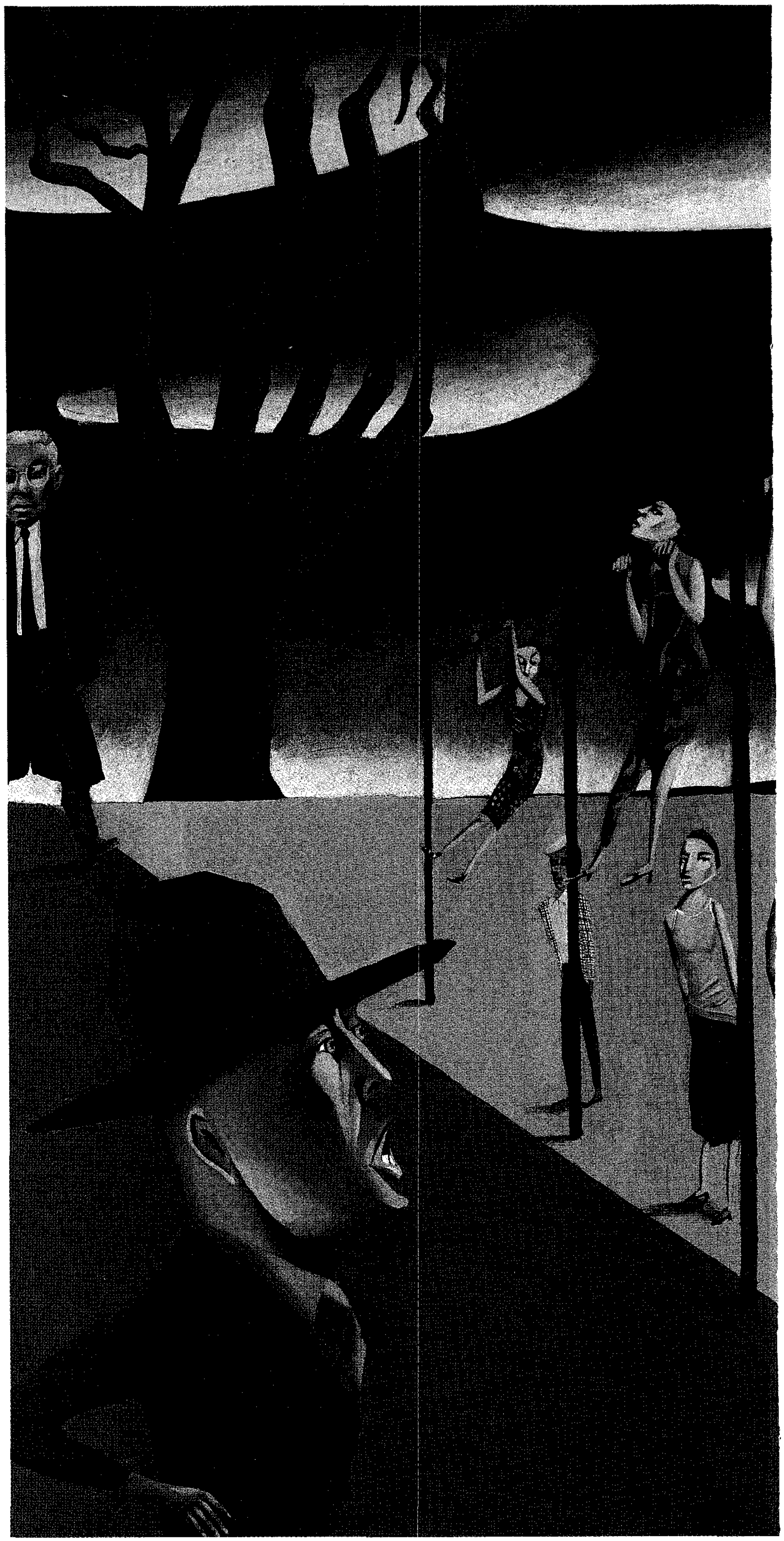
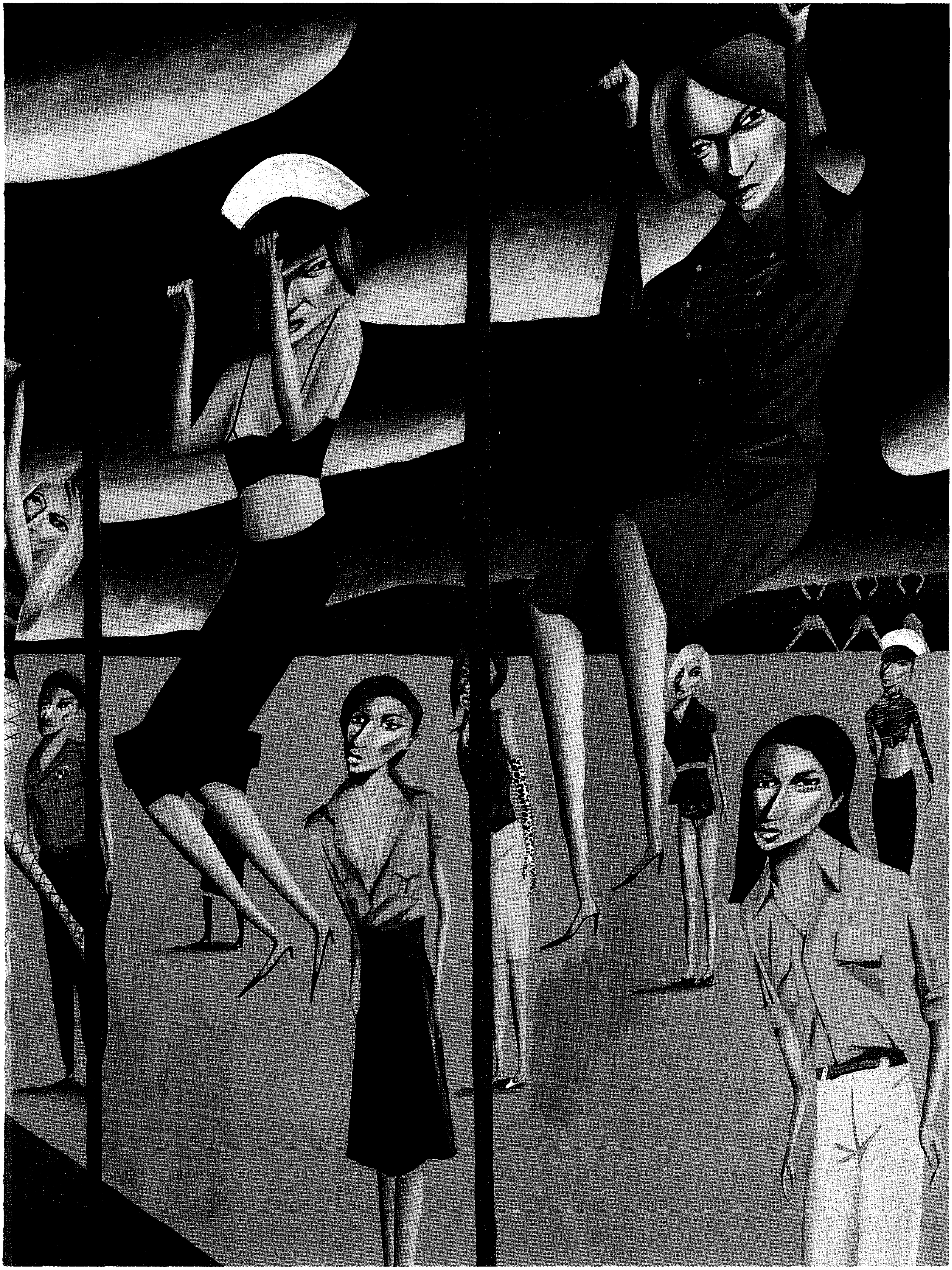


ILLUSTRATION BY MARK ULRIKSEN *Military looks by, clockwise from top left*



Comme des Garçons, two by Christian Dior, four by Louis Vuitton, Hermès, Vuitton again, MaxMara, and three by Miguel Adrover.

THE BORDERLINE

Patient, identified as one Alexander McQueen, picked up 9/26/00 at 9:06 P.M. for observation. Location: Fashion show of patient's own designs held in an old bus depot in southwest London. Patient is under delusion that said bus depot is actually Bedlam, the eighteenth-century madhouse.

Garments in presentation indicative of patient's self-destructive urges; e.g., model in beige skirt and top appeared wearing a castle built out of matchsticks on her shoulder, with a taxidermied rat stuck to one turret, and model in ostrich-feather-igloo outfit ran out grasping own head in agony. Another clawed at a mirror.

Throughout his career, patient has exhibited tendencies of rage (as a young tailor's apprentice, he wrote "I am a Cunt" inside a bespoke suit intended for Prince Charles), narcissism, paranoia, obsession-compulsion, and grandiosity. In his clothes, masculine tailoring struggles against exotic femininity, a conflict that may be traced back to patient's relationship with his father, a London taxi-driver, who has rarely been spotted at his son's shows.

Recommendations for treatment: Although obviously incurable, patient displays a highly developed commercial sense, and recently sold a majority of his business to Gucci Group for a reported eighty million dollars. Patient's grandiosity and narcissism seem likely to increase in the near future. It is advisable that he remain under constant observation until further notice.

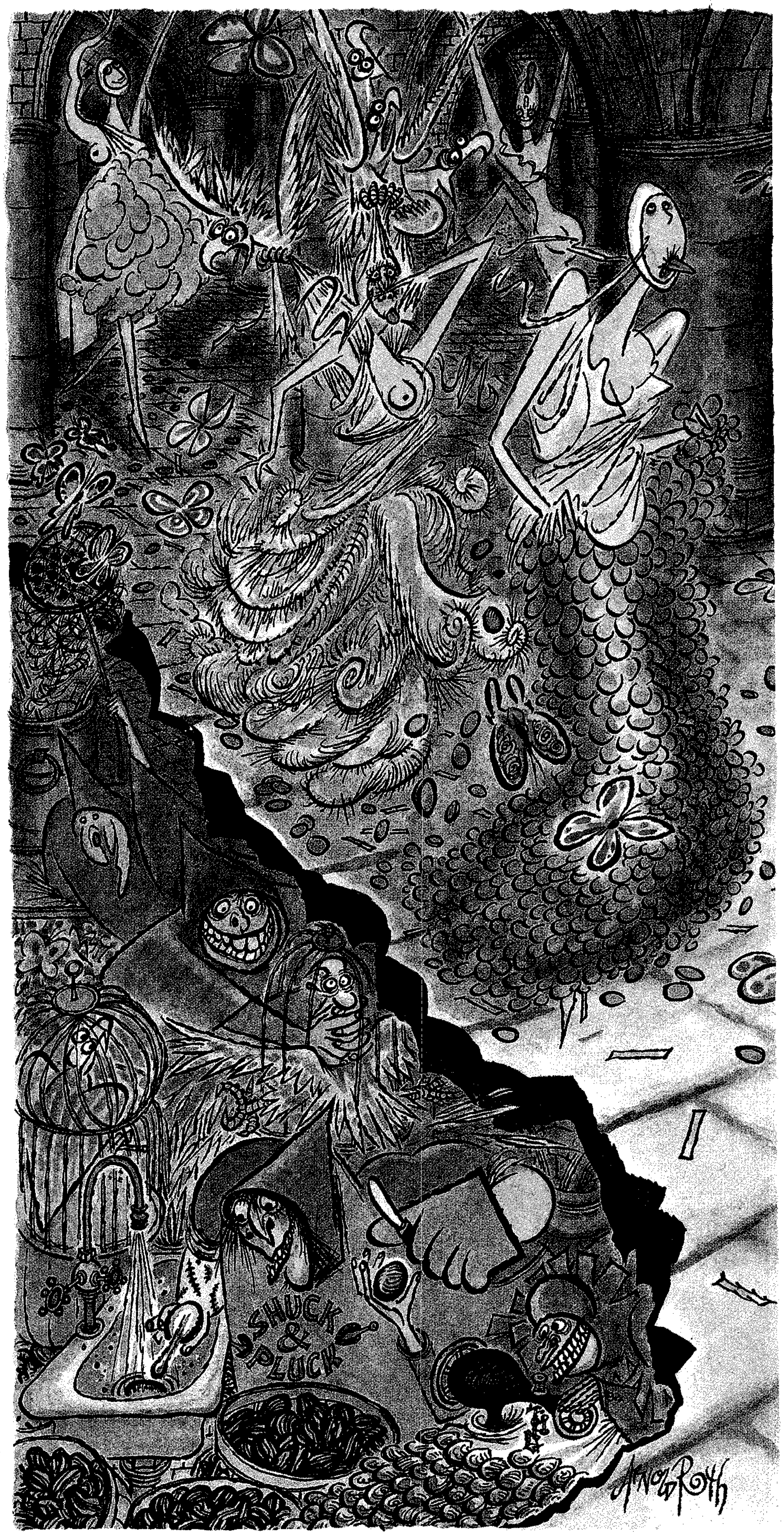
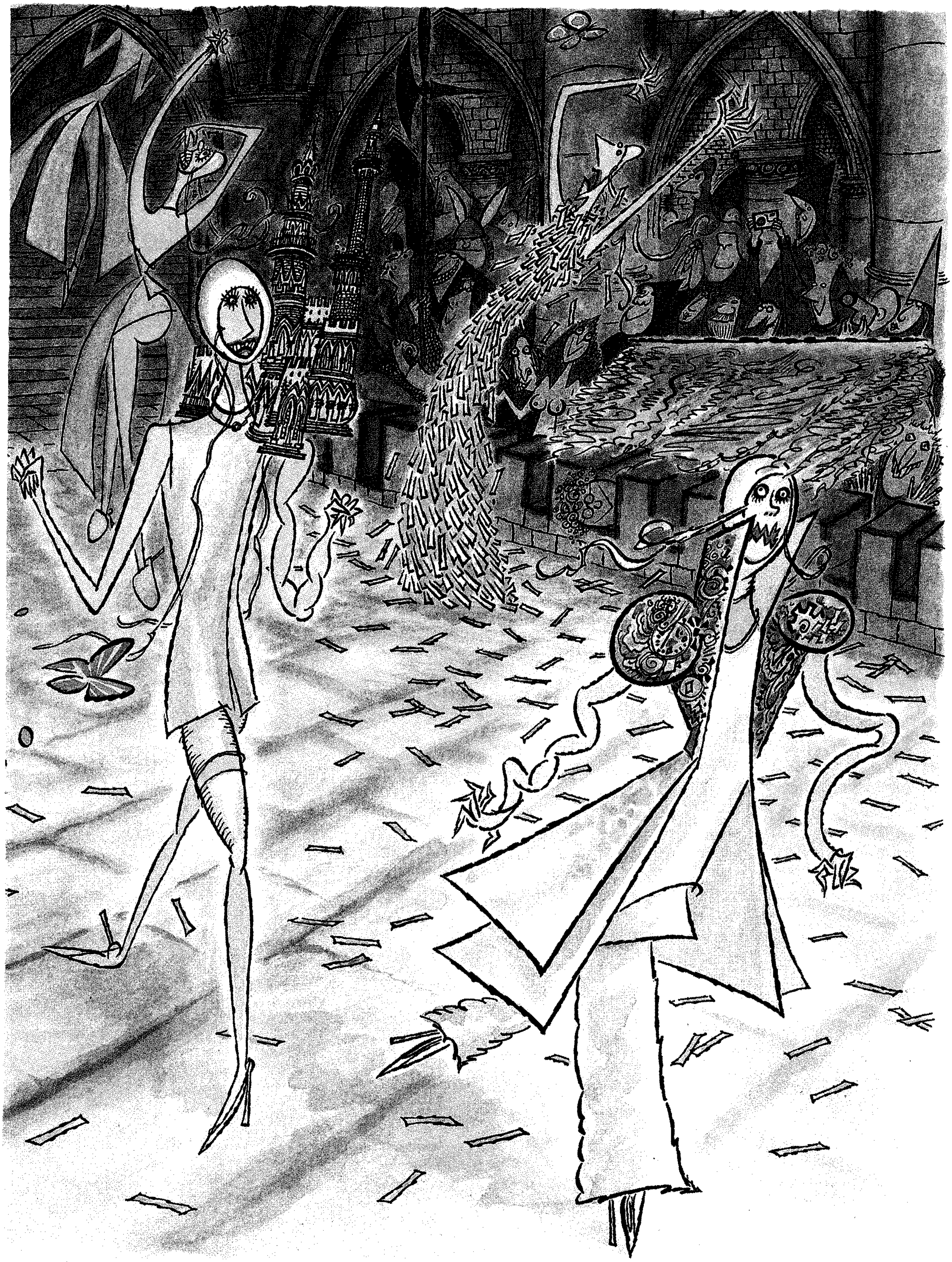


ILLUSTRATION BY ARNOLD ROTH *Alexander McQueen's spring collection, featuring*



amurai-inspired coats and garments made from mussel and razor-clam shells, was shown in a setting that evoked a madhouse.

THE PARTY LINE

"I would just like to thank all the darling designers who sent me trunkfuls of clothes to try on for tonight, in the hope that I would wear them on national television in front of tens of millions of people. As my fellow-nominees know, getting dressed for the Oscars is not like dressing for an important lunch at the Ivy or for the C.F.D.A. Awards, or for a dinner party at the Spielbergs'. If you make a mistake at a dinner party, you can always recover. If you make a mistake at the Oscars, as my dear friend Angelina Jolie did last year, when she turned up dressed like a Goth, or as Renée Zellweger did in 1999, when she wore a skintight, iridescent purple thing, it can haunt you for years. The trick at the Oscars is to wear something long enough to be regal but sporty enough to accent your girlishness—so important in this age of teen queens. I know I'm over my time—I see the TelePrompTer flashing!—but in closing I'd like to say that I hope it's not going to be a problem if I keep all the stuff you guys sent. I know you wanted the clothes back, but I really, really would like to keep everything. Because, no matter how much money your agent can get you for acting in a movie, there is nothing like getting beautiful clothes for free."

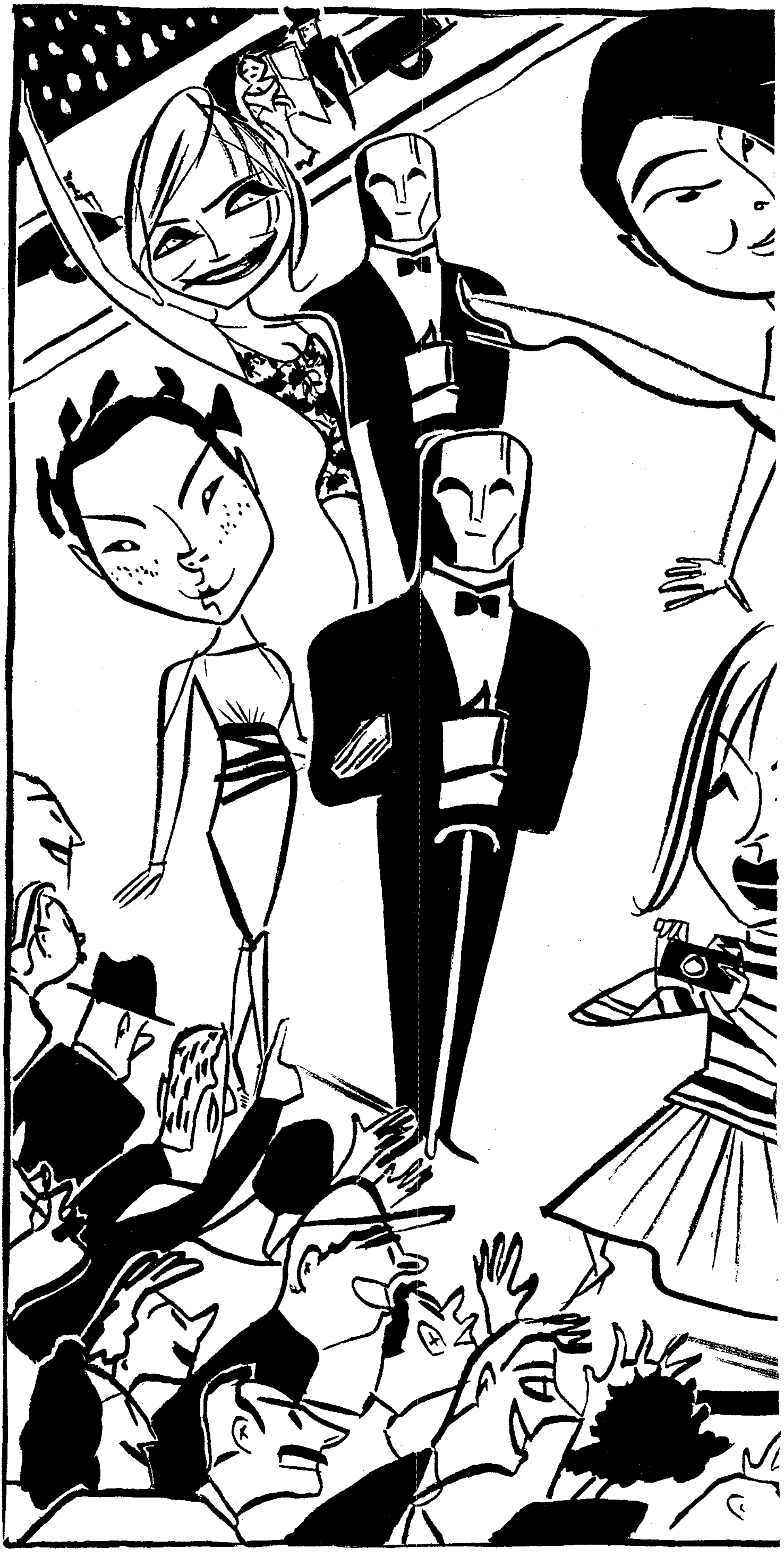
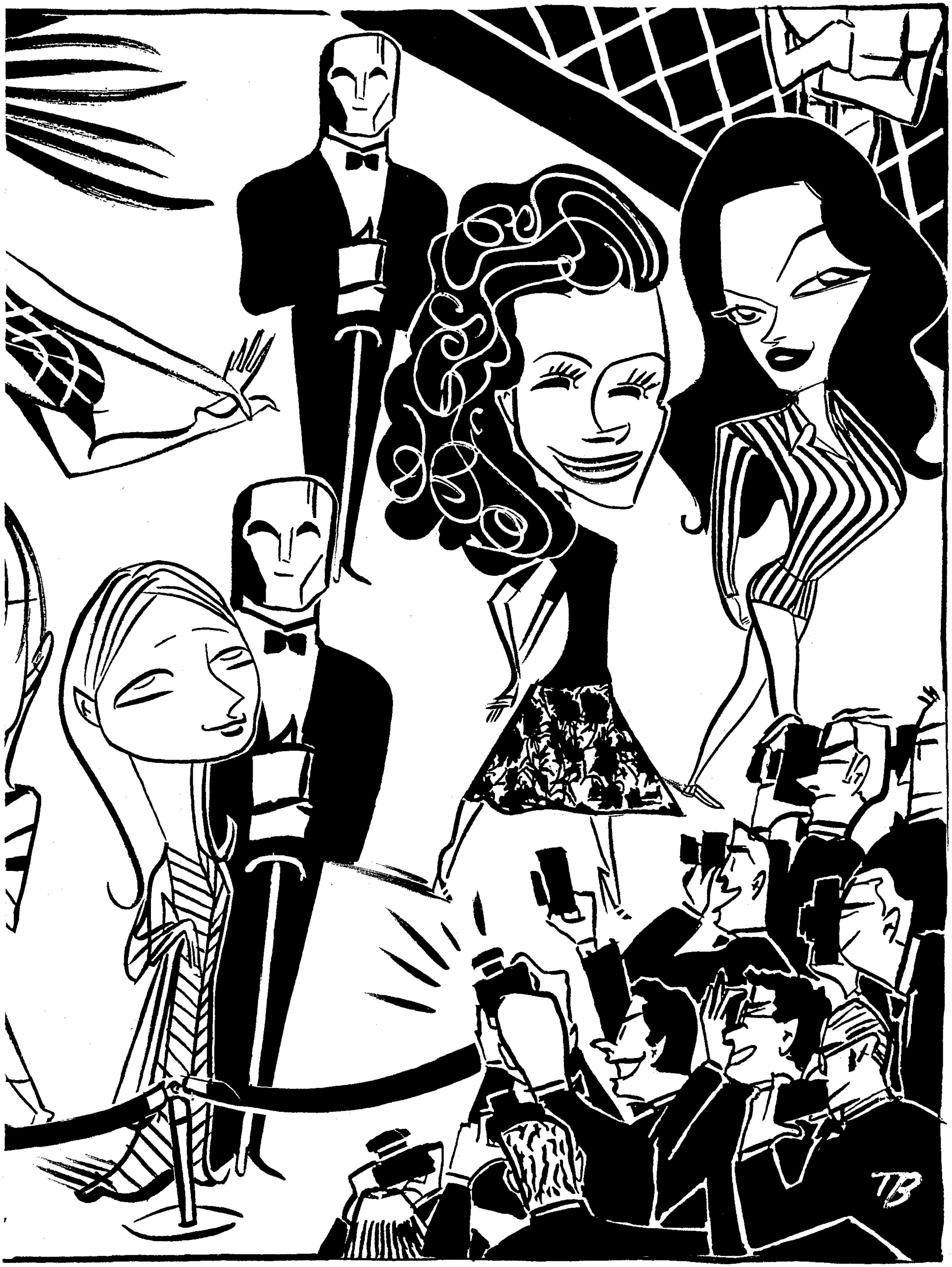


ILLUSTRATION BY TOM BACHTELL *Björk in Yves Saint Laurent; Cameron Diaz,*



Renée Zellweger, Julia Roberts in Prada; Michelle Yeoh, Gwyneth Paltrow in Ralph Lauren; Catherine Zeta-Jones in Junya Watanabe.

END OF THE LINE

PRIEST: *We gather here to commit fashion to the ground, sashes to sashes, bust to bust.*
MOURNERS: Lord & Taylor have mercy upon us.
PRIEST: *For fashion is but a shadow. It goeth from the conspicuous consumption of Versace, through the tough chic of Louis Vuitton, to the classicism of Ralph Lauren. But it hath no direction, nor doth it serve only the élite, as it once did. It descendeth into H&M and Target, and becometh a mass consumer good, and then is fashion no more.*
MOURNERS: Yea, though I walk through the aisle of Kmart, I shall fear no evil, for my Dolce & Gabbana silk organzine turtleneck side-tie dress with black silk-satin lace-trimmed bra and leather stilettos will comfort me.
PRIEST: *Verily, I say unto you, we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.*
MOURNERS: Not even this short silk ruffled dress with nude top and lace detail, by Imitation of Christ, the hip downtown design team?
PRIEST: *Fashion that is born of woman hath but a short season to live. A fad cometh up, and is cut down like a flower, only to give way to a new bloom.*
MOURNERS: Let us declare, then, that fashion has passed on, that it's a real yawn, in order to prepare the ground for a new savior next season.
PRIEST: *In the name of Imitation of Christ, Amen.* ♦

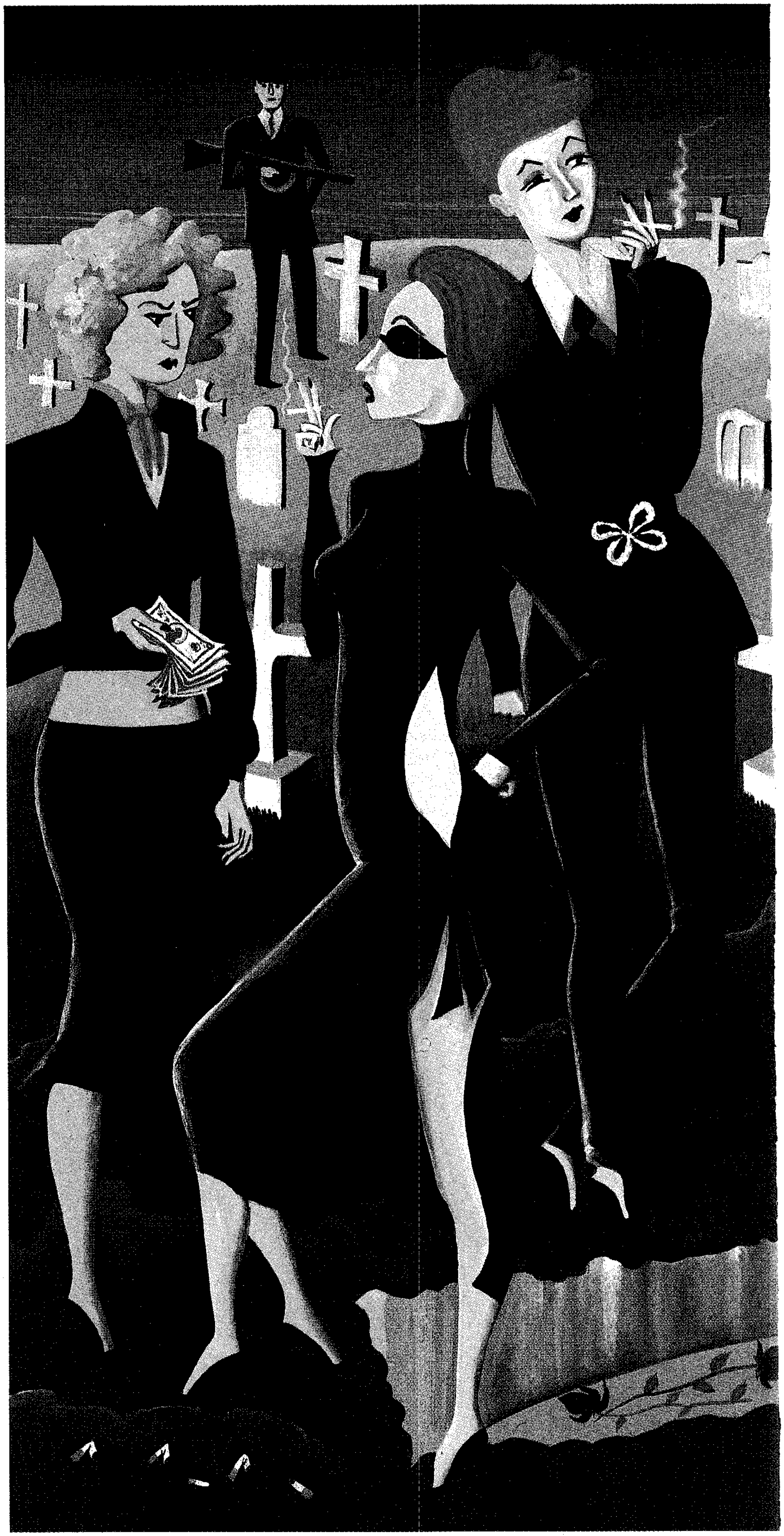
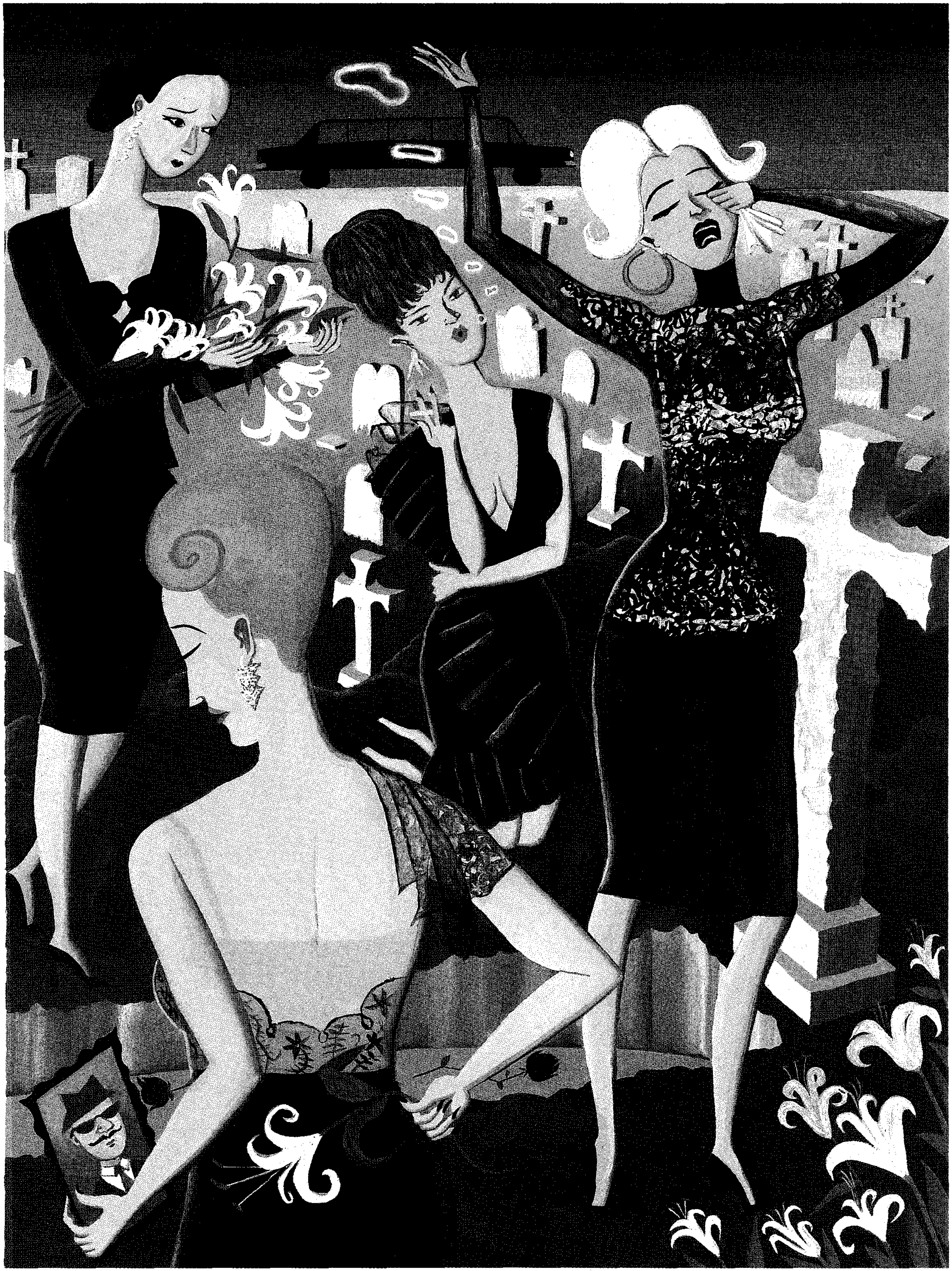


ILLUSTRATION BY KATHY OSBORN *Dolce & Gabbana's widow's weeds with a Sicilian*



twist share the after-hours aesthetic of Imitation of Christ's spring collection, which was shown in an East Village funeral parlor.

SABA

PROFILES

SCHNABEL IN LIGHTS

How the iconic painter of the eighties found himself hoping for an Oscar.

BY CALVIN TOMKINS

Julian Schnabel, painter and film director, wearing an ungirdled camel-colored bathrobe over blue pajamas, welcomed me to his house on West Eleventh Street with a double *abrazo*, his curly reddish-brown beard brushing both my cheeks. "Did you watch the awards?" he inquired, looking simultaneously amused and pained. "Can you believe it?" He was referring to the Golden Globe awards in Hollywood, two nights earlier. Javier Bardem, who plays the lead in Schnabel's new film, "Before Night Falls," had been one of five nominees for best actor of the year, but the award, given annually by the foreign journalists' association in Los Angeles, had gone to Tom Hanks, for his performance in "Cast Away." Schnabel couldn't quite suppress the news that he, personally, had found "Cast Away" "idiotic." His flight back from the West Coast had got in late the night before, but he looked fit and glossy—relaxed, genial, a bit more svelte than I remembered him. "I've been on a diet for three months," he confided. "I've lost twenty-five pounds. I was starting to look like Orson Welles."

Other voices could be heard as we progressed down the front hall, a baronial corridor punctuated at either end by towering, totemic-looking bronze sculptures by Schnabel. Olatz Lopez Garmendia Schnabel, Julian's Spanish-born wife, her dark beauty set off by a white terry-cloth robe, emerged from the bedroom and waved. Cy and Olmo, their seven-year-old twin sons, raced barefoot from the kitchen; they shook my hand unself-consciously before racing off again. In the kitchen, Javier Bardem was talking in Spanish on a cell phone. In spite of the domestic ebb and flow, being in Schnabel's house is like being in another country—baroque, theatrical, pre- rather than postmodern. A cast-bronze table in the dining alcove, with tiles set into the top at irregular intervals, is fourteen feet long. (Schnabel made it himself.) Schnabel's huge, dark paintings, with their weathered surfaces and abstract forms, could have been on the walls for centuries. The ceilings must be twenty feet high.

Julian wanted me to talk first to Bardem, whose breakthrough performance in "Before Night Falls" had repositioned him as an international star. When Schnabel chose Bardem for the part—after Benicio Del Toro turned it down—a lot of people wondered how this relatively little-known Spanish actor, whose work in films usually featured him in macho, tough-guy roles, could possibly play Reinaldo Arenas, the homosexual Cuban poet and novelist whose searing memoir is the basis of Schnabel's film. Casting is the key to directorial success, of course, and even though Schnabel had directed only one film before this (the 1996 "Basquiat"), he had decided, on the strength of Bardem's performances in Pedro Almodóvar's "Live Flesh," J. J. Bigas Luna's "Jamón, Jamón," and several other Spanish films, that this was an actor who could do anything. Unfaltering confidence in himself has always been one of Schnabel's strongest points—or most irritating flaws. By now, though, even the doubters were conceding that he had drawn from Bardem an astonishing and deeply affecting performance, one that was being talked about, even before the Golden Globes, as Oscar material, and Julian, needless to say, felt good about that. "All these actors have been coming

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARTIN SCHOELLER

Julian Schnabel with his wife, Olatz, and four of his five children. He says, "I never saw the future, and I still don't—there's just the present and nonexistence."

"Take a load off, Leonard—we're watching Generations X and Y duke it out."

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up to me," he said. "George Clooney told me how great he thought my movie was, and Ray Liotta, whom I don't even know, said, 'Just tell me where to be, man, and I'll be there.' They all want to be in my next film. Francis Ford Coppola sent me the script for 'On the Road,' by Kerouac. It's really wild. Now, if Fine Line"—the distributor of "Before Night Falls"—"would just spend some money advertising my film, instead of putting it into some dumb, poorly acted, waste-of-time movie like 'Thirteen Days' . . ." Julian said this mildly, without rancor. "I always want more," he added. "I want the public to be smarter. Maybe that's a pretentious idea?"

When Bardem got off the telephone, Julian took us into what he calls "the red room," a vast salon with oversized burgundy sofas and four huge, predominantly red paintings from his "Los Patos de Buen Retiro" series, and announced that he was going to leave us alone to talk. We sat down at one end of a long sofa—the end with a hippopotamus skull on a Biedermeier table—and Bardem, who, with his bushy hair, broken nose, and mobile mouth, really does look a lot like the photographs of Reinaldo Arenas, talked about working with Schnabel on the film, most of which was shot on location in Mexico. "It was hard, really *hard*," he said. "We work eighteen hours every day for three months. Julian is not a mechanical director. He doesn't know exactly how he's going to shoot a scene, which is great, because he makes you responsible. He makes you live the role twenty-four hours a day. Once, back in New York, we were shooting this scene in the kitchen where I break a glass and cut my hand, and I was nervous, I didn't know how to do it. I say, 'Julian, I need you to tell me how and what I have to do, which you haven't done in all these months.' He says, 'What am I supposed to say? You are the man. You are Reinaldo.' A good answer. He gave me this trust. The movie talks about freedom, and we have to be free to act."

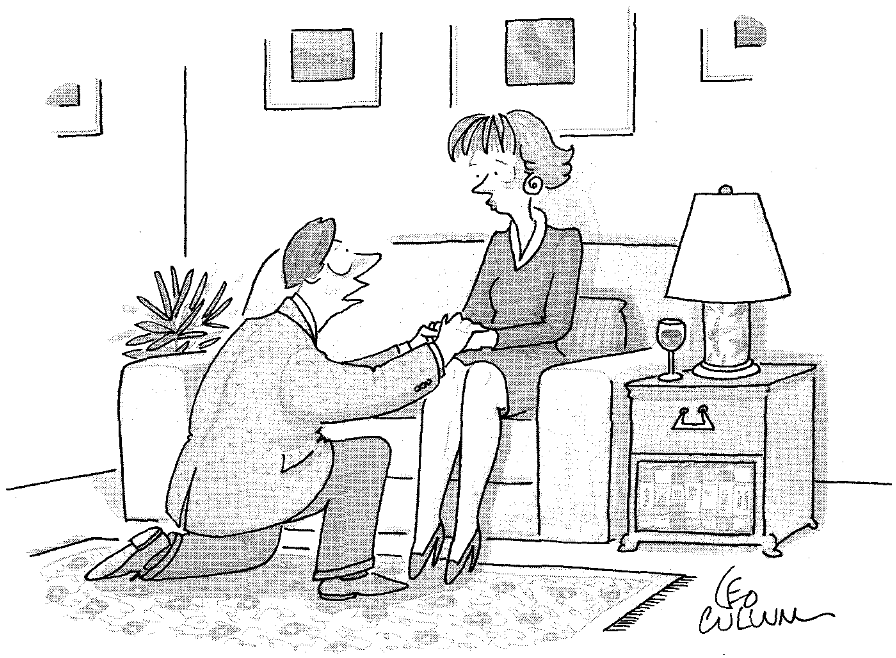
To the surprise of those who consider Schnabel undisciplined, he brought the film in on time and within its eight-million-dollar budget, and he earned, according to Bardem, respect and real affection from his crew and from the cast, which included his pals Sean Penn and Johnny Depp in supporting roles. The movie hews very closely to Arenas's book, with some scenes from other Arenas books or from Schnabel's imagination. (Schnabel wrote the screenplay, in collaboration with Cunningham O'Keefe and Lázaro Gómez Carriles.) It tells the story of a dirt-poor peasant boy who joins the ragtag Castro guerrillas, is educated by the revolution, becomes a writer, gets his first novel published, and is then undone by his *defecto*—which in this case is not just overt and insatiable homosexuality but a compulsion to tell the truth as he sees it. Censored, harassed, and eventually jailed by the regime, he keeps on writing, hiding his manuscripts or smuggling them out of Cuba. Eventually, he slips into exile with the Mariel boatlift and spends his last years in New York, where, dying of AIDS, he finishes his devastating memoir and commits suicide. A grim tale, it is also a literary dynamo that generates erotic energy, humor, and bitter wisdom, qualities that Schnabel has caught in his film. "Basquiat," a meditation on the short life of the New York painter Jean-Michel Basquiat, was very much a painter's film, drenched in the gritty chromatics of downtown lofts and city streets. "Before Night Falls" is a painter's film, too—a visual object, a movie whose look and weight and feel carry the story as much as the script does. But Schnabel's new film is a huge step beyond "Basquiat." Among other things, it's the most authentic portrait of a writer I've ever seen on film. I liked it more the second time, finding all sorts of connections I hadn't noticed before; the scenes go by very quickly in the first forty minutes or so, with swift, sure strokes that make their point and don't linger, so it's easy to miss the visual and aural innovations that Schnabel has pulled off. Alone among the nineteen-eighties art stars who have tried their hand at filmmaking, Schnabel has not only mastered the craft but made a film that succeeds, in mass-market Hollywood terms and on its own terms, as a work of art.

Predictably, the New York art mafia was now saying that Julian Schnabel had found his true métier, as a filmmaker—the implication being that we can forget about him as a painter. Ever since the early nineteen-eighties, when Schnabel's broken-plate paintings helped shatter the decade-long strictures of minimal and conceptual art, and his brash self-confidence gave voice to a new era of artists as media stars, certain critics and quite a few artists have wished that he would go away. Schnabel was the most visible and the most talkative of the neo-expressionists, a far from cohesive international group that included David Salle, Eric Fischl, Francesco Clemente, Sandro Chia, Anselm Kiefer, Sigmar Polke, and others. He was the one who wore pajamas or a sarong to public functions, who went up to museum curators in restaurants and asked why they didn't show his work, and who said things like "I'm the closest you'll get to Picasso in this life." His chutzpah and his naïve, unguarded self-admiration made him an irresistible target, and he got blamed for many of the perceived excesses of the eighties—self-promotion and media hype, inflated prices, speculation buying, art collecting for social advancement. When the art boom went south, at the end of that decade, and a backlash set in, Schnabel's reputation and his prices entered a decline from which they have only recently started to recover. Not a catastrophic decline, mind you. Schnabel paintings that might have brought between five and six hundred thousand dollars at auction in the mid-eighties went for half that much in the mid-nineties, but his dealer, the Pace Gallery, continued to sell his new work—there was always plenty of new work—for high prices (between a hundred thousand and a hundred and fifty thousand dollars for a large picture), and museums and collectors continued to buy it.

To help finance "Before Night Falls," whose production costs Schnabel paid, he sold one of his early plate paintings, for seven hundred thousand dollars. His work has kept right on bringing in more than enough to support him and his children (he has five) and his houses—besides the one on West Eleventh Street, he owns a Stanford White gem in Montauk—and the household and studio assistants, and the vacation trips, and the furniture and art works and *objets* and foodstuffs and wines and cigars that a man of his overflowing appetites requires. "Listen," he had said during a recent screening, when someone asked if he was going to make films instead of paintings from now on. "Listen, I've made a thousand paintings and I've made two films. I'm a painter. Does that answer your question?"

The painter drifted back into the red room ten minutes after leaving us there—maybe he had tried to stay away longer but couldn't—and started telling me how Javier Bardem turned himself into Reinaldo Arenas. "I have to leave the room," Bardem said, after a few minutes. "Too much compliment." He hugged Julian, and they exchanged a few words in Spanish—since his marriage to Olatz, Julian has become fluent in Spanish. "We should go upstairs to the studio," he said, after Bardem left. "It's important to dispel this idea that I'm an artist who's turned filmmaker. I didn't paint while we were shooting the film, but I've done a lot of paintings since then, and I thought you'd like to see some of them." Upstairs we went, accompanied by Zeus, Julian's American pit bull. Zeus (pronounced Zay-oos) is a crotch-bumper but friendly. I've visited this studio a number of times over the past ten years, but its dimensions still awe me. The scale, let's say, is in keeping with Julian's capacity for wonder. Two twenty-foot-high paintings stood against the left wall. Each had "Zeus" and "Duende" painted on it, the words flowing above, below, or on top of vehement abstract passages. "I started those paintings in 1992," Schnabel said. "When I got through with the movie, a year ago last November, I came back and finished them by putting in the 'Duende's and 'Zeus'es." He took the word *duende* from García Lorca. "If somebody plays something with great inspiration, you could say they do it with *duende*. A *duende* can be a dwarf, or a magic character, or the thing that makes you do whatever you do well." And Zeus? Zeus was Zeus, one more bearer of the mythical dimension that Schnabel has always liked to build into his work. In Mexico, scouting locations, he saw a white pit bull watching him attentively from behind a fence. He asked what the dog's name was, and when he was told it was Zeus he persuaded the owner to sell it to him on the spot.

A somewhat smaller, brighter, and more colorful painting in a heavy white frame was displayed on a metal stand. Its swirling reds and yellows looked as if they'd been slathered on with his fingers, instead of a brush, and Schnabel confirmed that they had been. "There are seven of these, and six smaller ones," he said, "all done last summer in Montauk." He lifted the painting out of the frame, waving off my attempt to help, and replaced it with another the same size. This one had "Olatz" painted across the surface in lush, broadly spaced letters; there was a sense of landscape, sunlight—a windy day at the beach. "I like painting outdoors, where the light keeps changing," he mused. He has painted on tennis courts and parking lots, and in



"Wow! From down here your nostrils look huge!"

an outdoor studio he built on Andy Warhol's Montauk estate, which he used to rent. Now he's building a permanent outdoor studio on his own property.

"After making the movie, and having to be so communicative with people, it's interesting to make a nice, hermetic painting that says everything I want it to say," Schnabel observed. "I made a lot of different kinds of pictures. They're more infantile than ever, don't you think?" "Infantile" was good—the new paintings had an exuberant playfulness that smacked of pure id. Julian can't help painting too many pictures, and his batting average fluctuates accordingly—at the moment, I would have said it was about .287. That's not bad, of course, considering that on a good day he can still hit one out of the park.

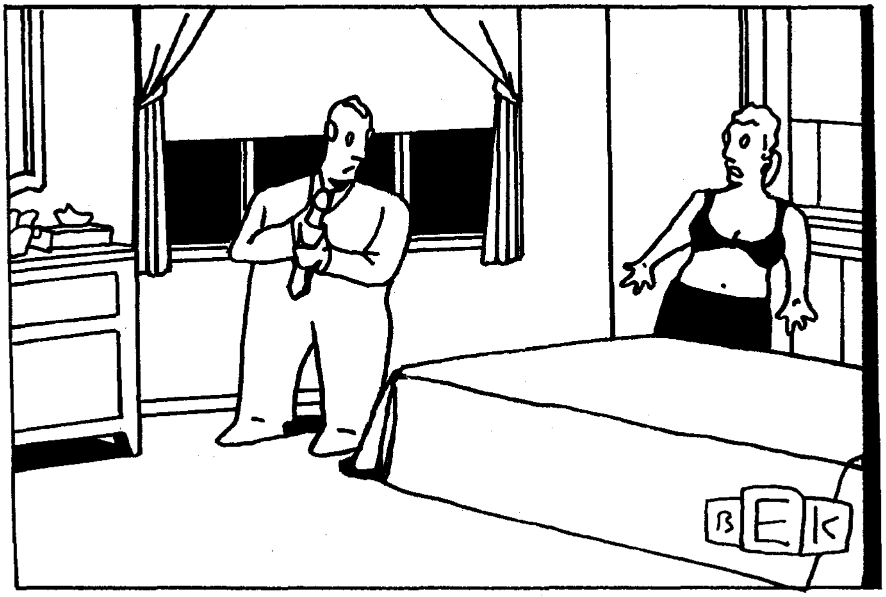
Schnabel usually paints in series, five or ten pictures in the same general idiom, working through its various ramifications. The main image in one of the new series was a sort of high, wavelike, cresting dune, with lush purples and browns and looping bright-red skeins draped across the surface horizontally. ("They were done in Spain. Olatz has a house in San Sebastián, and we went there last summer with the kids.") Another series had the word "Licaboles" scrawled across the surface in red or yellow. "Every morning," he explained, "I wake up to the sound of my dog licking his balls—that's '*licaboles*.' "

Cy Schnabel darted into the studio to ask a question. "How come you're not wearing your shoes, sweetheart?" Julian asked plaintively. "You have a cold. Put on some slippers, please, I'm sorry." Cy is named after Cy Twombly, one of the few contemporary artists for whom Julian's admiration is unqualified. His brother Olmo is named after the Gérard Depardieu character in Bertolucci's film "1900." Julian's three other children, who are from his first marriage, to the Belgian photographer Jacqueline Beaurang, are Lola Montès Schnabel, a nineteen-year-old art student, named after the Max Ophuls movie "Lola Montès"; Stella Madrid Schnabel, seventeen, who was downstairs, looking after Cy and Olmo; and Vito Maria Schnabel, fourteen, whose name pays homage to Rainer Maria Rilke and "The Godfather," Parts I and II (from which Schnabel, who has an encyclopedic film memory, can quote pages of dialogue at will), but emphatically not to "Godfather III," which he considers an abomination, a desecration of the temple of cinematic art. "I loved making these paintings," Julian said, gazing benignly at his work. "Other people can make movies, but who else can do this?"

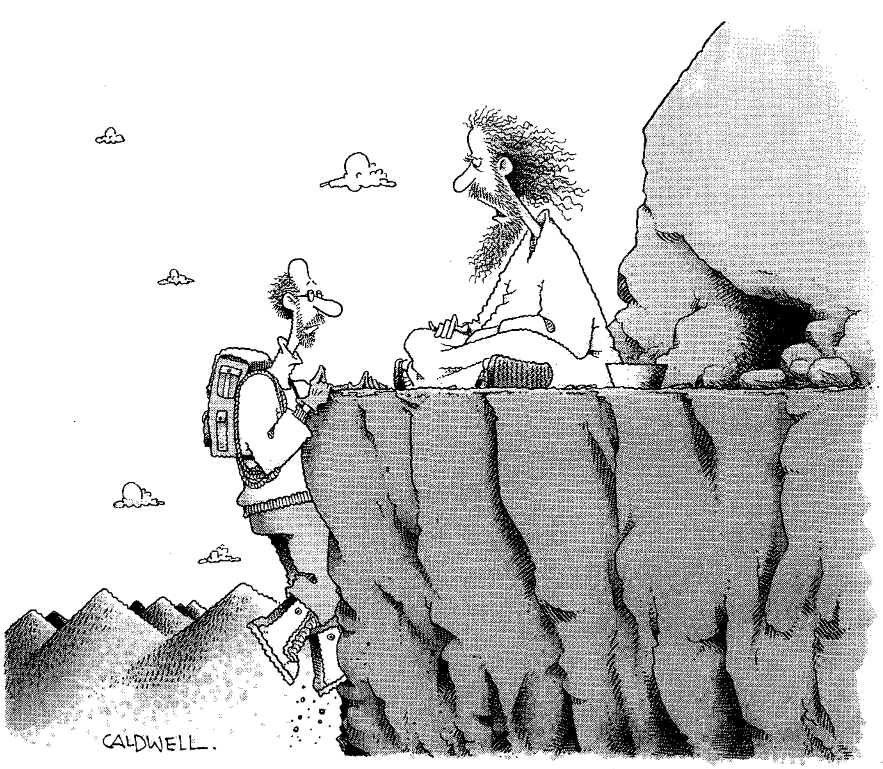
A few days later, on a Sunday morning, Schnabel called me at home. "Why don't you come down?" he said. "I'm all alone." Alone, as I learned when I got there, meant that the twins, their babysitter, and Zeus were present but Olatz was out. We sat in the red room, where for about three hours we reviewed Julian's forty-nine years on earth.

"My father left Czechoslovakia in 1926, when he was fifteen," he told me. "He went to Antwerp for a few years, and then stowed away on a boat to New York, where he met my mother." The youngest of three children, Julian spent his first fifteen years in Brooklyn. He remembers drawing a lot when he was little, and being encouraged to do so by his mother. "I was my mother's best friend," he said. "My brother and sister were eight and twelve years older than me, so they weren't around that much. My mom took me to the Museum of Natural History, and to the Met to see 'Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer,' and she enrolled me in the Brooklyn Museum School when I was only nine and too young to use oil paints. I never thought for one second about being an artist. I never saw the future, and I still don't—there's just the present and nonexistence. It was always like that."

Jack Schnabel, Julian's workaholic father, was in a number of different businesses—fur collars, high-grade meat products, supermarkets. In 1966, he moved his wife and youngest son from Brooklyn to Brownsville, Texas, where he had a new business, selling used clothes to Mexicans on both sides of the border. The cultural adjustment took some effort. "I grew up in a place where everybody was Jewish, so I didn't even think about it," Julian remembers. "There weren't many Jews in Brownsville, and they wondered why I seemed so comfortable with Gentiles. The fact was, I didn't really fit in anywhere." He spent the next three years going to the local high school, smoking marijuana, and hanging out with a bunch of blond-haired, laid-back surfers. "The beach was about twenty-four miles from Brownsville, so I learned to surf. Those guys were pretty cruel to me at first, but I got better at it, and we became friends. One summer, another guy and I drove across Mexico. We drove from Monterrey to Zacatecas to Guadalajara to San Luis Potosí, up through Durango and over to Mazatlán, and then back down the coast the other way to Puerto Vallarta, where they made 'Night of the



"Does my body make me look fat?"



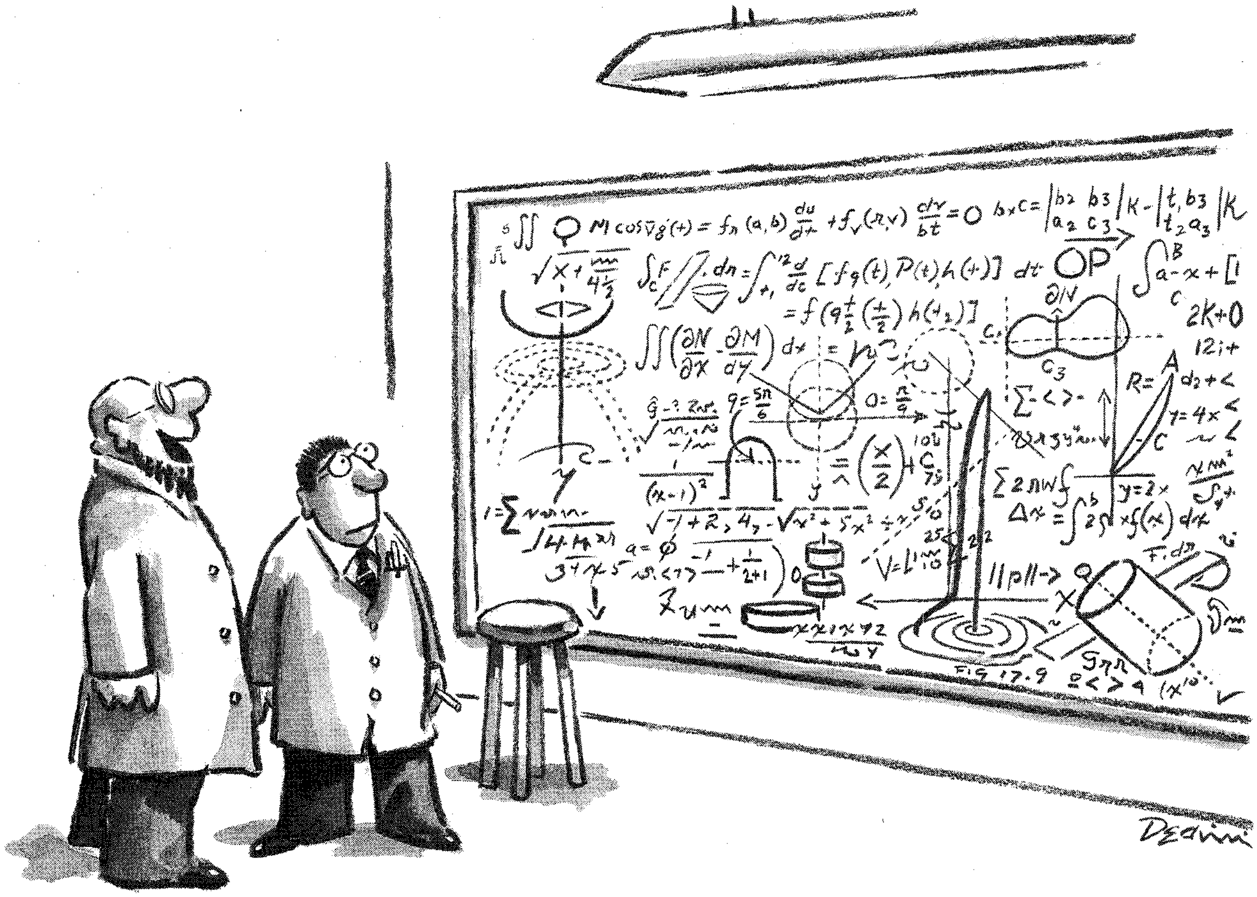
"No offense, but I'm trying to attract a younger audience."

Iguana.' It was like seeing the world for the first time. That trip freed me from my past, from being a kid in this ordinary house in Brooklyn, with ordinary furniture. I saw things that were old, hacienda-style houses in the country with courtyards and pools, and I saw shacks made out of sticks." Julian fell in love with Mexico—the language, the architecture, the colors, the dust, the poverty, the oldness of it. "I was in Mérida thirty years ago," he said. "So when I wanted to find somewhere that looked like the Vedado section of Havana for my film I knew just where to go. I remembered it. All the stuff I do is about memory, and time."

Feeling that he didn't fit in anywhere never put a damper on his self-confidence. This was a kid, after all, who climbed up on the stage at a Catskills resort his parents took him to when he was five years old and belted out a solo version of "Hound Dog." At the University of Houston, he took the studio-arts program. The teachers left him alone, more or less, but one of them recommended him for the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program, a one-year postgraduate study grant that offered a small stipend and studio space in New York. Julian sent his slides to the Whitney in a brown paper bag, sandwiched between two slices of white bread, "so they'd notice them." He was accepted, and he moved back East in the summer of 1973. It took him only a few weeks to register his presence on the art scene. He met most of the downtown art crowd at Max's Kansas City, which had become famous as Andy Warhol's hangout. This was the decade when painting was supposed to be dead, replaced by video, installation art, performance art, body art, language art—all the new strategies that were banishing illusion (that discredited subterfuge) in favor of the real thing, the thing-in-itself, which so often turned out to be dishearteningly drab. Schnabel's semi-figurative paintings, with big, flat images that looked like Richard Lindner's, certainly did not fit in with the art of the nineteen-seventies, but that never worried Schnabel. Although he revered Pollock and Rothko, he felt closer to the Mexican muralists Rivera and Orozco than to the heroes of the New York School and their theory-bound successors. The artist who impressed him the most in those years was Joseph Beuys, the charismatic German conceptualist and teacher. Beuys came to New York in 1974, and spent a week at the René Block Gallery, on Spring Street, wrapped in a felt blanket, locked up in a steel cage with a live coyote. (The work was called "Coyote: I Like America and America Likes Me.") "The humor, the poetry of it, the selection of materials, the space—I loved seeing that," Schnabel told me.

Schnabel went to Europe for the first time in 1976, with his Texas girlfriend Jean Kallina. They went to Paris and Milan, where Jean tried to get work as a model, and when she decided to go home Julian stayed on. Dead broke, and speaking no Italian, he somehow persuaded a collector to commission ten paintings and provide a studio and materials for him to paint them. Italy's effect on him was as powerful as Mexico's. He went to Arezzo to see the Piero della Francesca frescoes, and to Assisi and Padua for the Giottos. "I loved the Fra Angelico paintings in the monastery of San Marco in Florence. That dry surface, the way the color sat, the drawing being so simple—and the fact that they were painted on architecture, that they were connected to the size of the room, the thickness of the walls."

Back in New York, Schnabel worked as a cook at Mickey Ruskin's Ocean Club restaurant, and later at another Ruskin restaurant, called Locale—Ruskin had owned Max's Kansas City, which folded in 1981. His paintings got larger and emptier. A few images recurred in mostly abstract spaces: a male torso; a treelike form, sometimes abstracted to a cone; branching lines, like veins. Religious (mainly Catholic) titles and references—Julian's response to Italy and to his own exfoliating ambition—appeared in more than one picture; he painted a "St. Sebastian," a "St. Francis in Ecstasy," a "Giacomo Expelled from the Temple," and, for an ecumenical clincher, a "Portrait of God." He wanted the pictures to look rough and unwieldy, like walls. Schnabel was trying to work out something, a kind of tension and conflict he felt between the objectness of the surface and the image he painted on it. The eureka moment came in 1978, in a hotel room in Barcelona. A gallery in Düsseldorf had offered him a show, and



"Hey, no problem!"

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after the opening there he had gone to Italy again, and then to Barcelona, where he was bowled over by Gaudí's fantastic mosaics in the Park Güell. "After seeing those," he told me, "I went to some restaurant that had a crummy mosaic on the wall, a white mosaic, and I thought, Shit, I'm going to break a bunch of plates and use them as the surface of a painting. I was staying in a room on the Ramblas that cost two-fifty a night, and there was a closet that came out into the room, very human-size. I measured it with my arms, and when I came back to New York I had a guy build me two Masonite armatures with those dimensions. I went to the Salvation Army and bought a bunch of plates. The guy who sold them to me had trouble reaching over the edge of the cardboard box, and I told him just to drop them in, don't worry if they break." It took a while to master the plate tectonics. He stood the first painting upright too early and stayed awake all one night listening to fragments falling off the canvas and hitting the floor. But he knew he was onto something. "The plates seemed like light," he recalls, "and when you drew a line on them the line had a different depth of field from the plates. The work had its own body and dynamic, it didn't have anything to do with anyone else's work, and it was asking me to make other versions."

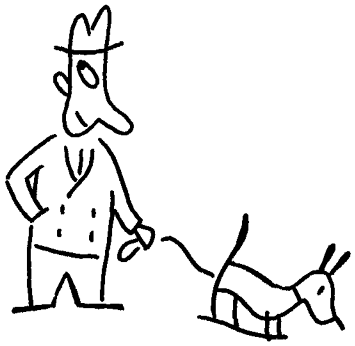
Not many exhibitions have had the impact of Schnabel's plate paintings at the Mary Boone Gallery in November of 1979. (It was actually his second show there; the first had been eight months earlier.) A new, bravura kind of energy had brought back heroic painting, it seemed, and this was confirmed by the New York débuts of Salle, Clemente, Chia, Kiefer, Immendorff, and a dozen other native and foreign painters. Within two years, Schnabel's top prices had soared from two thousand to forty thousand dollars a picture, and he was showing jointly with Mary Boone and Leo Castelli, the master dealer, whose gallery represented Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns—Schnabel was the first young artist Castelli had taken on in twelve years. (When Julian left Castelli and Boone, in 1984, for the uptown Pace Gallery, Castelli was stunned. According to Julian, Castelli's parting words were "You have all my contempt.") Collectors who had more or less quit buying in the nineteen-seventies joined the rush to acquire Schnabel and the other neo-expressionists, and European galleries vied to show them. Some critics couldn't stand Schnabel's work, but most of them took it seriously; his talent was too big and obvious to ignore. Even Hilton Kramer, our live-in reactionary, conceded in 1981 that "despite the crockery and the claptrap, Mr. Schnabel is at times a painter of remarkable powers." The *Times* critic Michael Brenson, calling his talent "unmistakable," wrote in 1984 that there were "very few artists around . . . who have anything approaching his ability to make paintings that seize hold of the space around them."

A Schnabel retrospective, organized by the Whitechapel Gallery, in London, came to the Whitney Museum in 1987. The airplane carrying the paintings broke down in Abu Dhabi, and Schnabel pitched in to help Lisa Phillips, the Whitney curator, pull together a temporary, alternative exhibition in time for the opening; the substitutions didn't particularly upset him, since he tends to think everything he does is pretty marvellous. The Museum of Modern Art, however, has consistently shunned him—its Schnabel holdings today are limited to two drawings, three prints, and the promised gift of a plate painting. (When, in 1984, the *Times* reported that "the Modern has not yet acquired" a Schnabel, William Rubin, MOMA's director of painting and sculpture, fired off a letter of correction; the sentence, he said, should not have included the word "yet.") Schnabel's personality often got in the way of his art. If you didn't know about his openhearted generosity—the efforts he makes to help other artists (until they become rivals) and his willingness to give paintings to any number of worthy causes—you could easily be put off by the things he has said in published interviews. "My peers are the painters who speak to me: Duccio, Giotto, van Gogh," he declaimed to one reporter. "Julian is unedited," says the writer and editor Ingrid Sischy, who is probably his closest friend. "He says things sometimes that, if you love him, you think, God, I wish he hadn't said that. But Julian's unedited quality is what allows him to be the kind of artist he is. It's what allows him to take the leap of faith, to throw into his paintings all those elements, some of which so often work brilliantly."

Whatever was going on in his life, he kept making paintings. He made them on broken plates, on velvet, on wood, on cowhide, on maps of the world, on old tarps, on backdrops for the Kabuki theatre sent to him by his Japanese dealer, on mattresses, on nineteenth-century landscapes that he bought in junk shops and painted over, on a patched canvas that was once the floor of a boxing ring at the Gramercy Gym. His paintings could be austerely empty, with a few iconic forms in muted earth tones, or sometimes with just a word or a phrase painted in huge capital letters ("Spinoza," for example, or "The Teddy Bears' Picnic"). They could also be lush and Dionysian (and occasionally bombastic), teeming with religious symbols and abstract organic forms. Looking at the childlike scribbles and blobs on a Schnabel canvas, an unconvinced museum curator gibed, "He got a lot from Cy Twombly, but not enough."

Fifteen years ago, Schnabel invited me to come to his studio, which was on White Street then, to see three new paintings he had done in Mexico. They were on heavy canvas tarps, the kind used to cover tractor-trailer loads; driving near Zihuatanejo one day, Julian had stopped his car and bought one tarp for seventy dollars, from a man whose truck had broken down, and then he had gone looking and found two more. They were about twenty feet long by seventeen feet wide, stained and grimy from hard use, and the images he had painted on them were nightmarish—elongated figures with savage, part-human features, tubular bodies, and ferocious, ostrichlike legs and feet. They looked ancient, malevolent, evil. Julian had painted them outdoors, rigging bamboo poles to hang the tarps from palm trees, using a ladder to reach the upper areas. "I felt like all the blood and the history and the horror of Mexico was coming up from the sand through my feet, making those paintings," he told me.

In the mid-eighties, he started doing a lot of portraits. By now, he has done more than fifty of them, and a few, such as a triple portrait of the billionaire shipowner Stavros Niarchos and one of Julian's friend the novelist William Gaddis, are up there with his best work. Portraits keep the cash flowing, as Andy Warhol found out. Critics who had attacked Schnabel for grandiose behavior, self-indulgence, and lack of self-criticism could now attack him for hanging out with rich people. Robert Hughes, reviewing Schnabel's somewhat fatuous 1987 autobiography (it was called "C.V.J.—Nicknames of Maître d's & Other Excerpts from Life"), compared his painting to Sylvester Stallone's acting, "a lurching display of oily pectorals—except that Schnabel makes bigger public claims for himself." Hilton Kramer, cured of his earlier, grudging admiration, wrote a 1989 diatribe whose headline read "GHASTLY SCHNABEL SHOW A FIT ENDING TO GHASTLY DECADE FOR ART WORLD." "I'm sort of counting on you to set the record straight about me," Schnabel used to say to me when we saw each other, but I didn't think I could do that. There was just too much work, and probably too much Julian. What I think is that he's a major artist whose paintings are almost always interesting, even when they're not major.



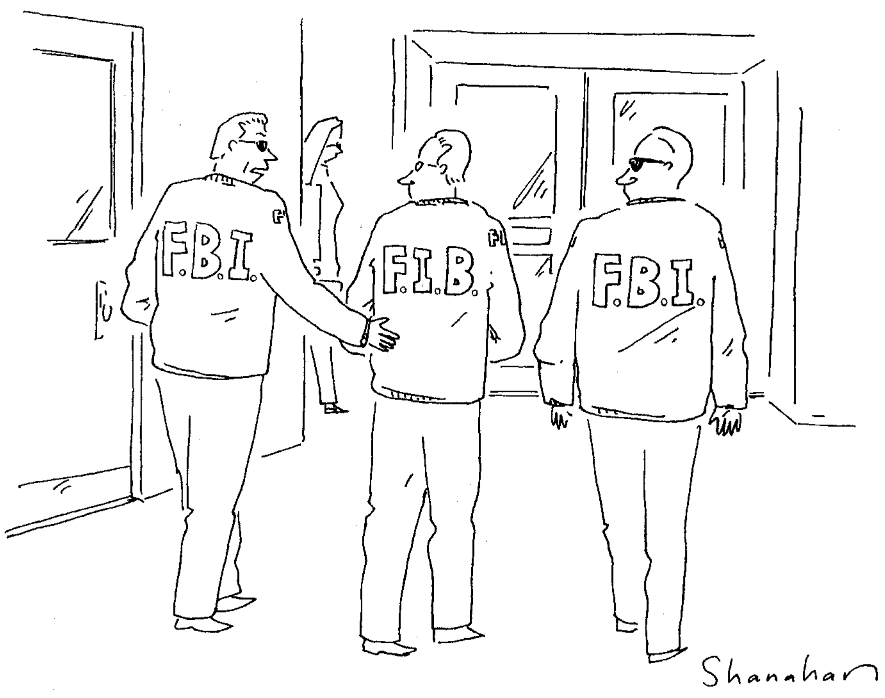
The art of the nineteen-eighties is up for reconsideration. The work of Schnabel, Salle, Fischl, and other painters has been around for twenty years, and some younger artists, critics, and curators are looking at it now with considerable interest. "I think his example helped a lot of artists who probably wouldn't admit it," the much admired young figurative painter John Currin has said. "The thing that affected me was this idea that you could do something embarrassing. . . . Don't edit your taste, which is what I'd been doing." Schnabel's unedited risk-taking was very important to his own contemporaries and rivals, as David Salle noted the other day. "Julian had a way of playing fast and loose with images that was liberating—the idea that you could accept or deny their meaning," he told me. It has been widely reported that Schnabel and Salle's friendship broke up over a painting exchange in 1980, when Schnabel, after choosing a Salle diptych, reversed the two panels and painted Salle's portrait in orange on one of them. The story, according to Salle, was more complicated. "Julian called me up, and said, 'Your painting is ready,' " he recalls. "I went to his studio, and there was a big rectangle covered by a sheet, with two chairs placed in front of it. Julian clasped me to his bosom and said, 'I've done something which will join us together in history,' and then he unveiled this painting. I was momentarily flabbergasted, but very quickly realized it was O.K. Its audaciousness was exciting. It was simultaneously an act of brotherhood, transgression, complicity, and aesthetic challenge." They owned it jointly, and sold it jointly to the collectors Eugene and Barbara Schwartz.

I went up to Albany with Schnabel for a screening of "Before Night Falls" at the Albany campus of the State University of New York. The screening was in an auditorium on the downtown campus, and the sound system was not great—in fact, the sound went out entirely for about a minute toward the end of the film, so Schnabel, affably enough, got up on the stage afterward and recited the dialogue we had missed. The full house applauded him warmly. Later, at a restaurant dinner arranged by his friend William Kennedy, the novelist, Julian maintained his affability for another two hours, talking about the film, answering questions, saying things that could sound, to someone who actively disliked him, like the rants of an egomaniac. "I think I made the best film of the year," he said at one point. "I know it's bad form to say that, but it's the way I feel." It has never seemed plausible to Schnabel that anybody could actively dislike him. He says things that most artists think but usually find ways of keeping to themselves.

On the train back to New York the next day, I asked Schnabel what had induced him, a Brooklyn-born Jewish heterosexual, to make a film about a gay Cuban poet. "I saw a documentary on TV about Reinaldo," he said, "and I thought, This guy is funny, and modest, and then I read his book 'Before Night Falls.' A lot of stuff had happened to him, and not just to him. It was also about Cuba, this little country that's been such an obsession with us, although nobody knows anything about it. And I guess my wife being Spanish— Olatz grew up in Spain and France, but when we got married she was dying to go to Havana, and we went several times. Anyway, when I saw that documentary, I knew I wanted to do the movie." Schnabel's film makes brilliant use, in voice-over, of two Arenas poems. The first, called "The Parade Begins," describes the euphoric optimism of the revolution's early days—"*banderas, banderas,*" flags everywhere. It plays off against one written twenty years later, "The Parade Ends," which repeats the word *cerrado* (closed): "*Todos cerrados, cines cerrados, parques cerrados*"—forty years of Cuban history and betrayal. "My favorite line in the film," Julian said, "comes at the end, when Reinaldo is dying in his room in New York, and he touches the cheek of Lázaro, his friend, and says, 'I have never met a boy as authentic as you, Lázaro.' It's a terrible life, Reinaldo's, but it was leaning toward the divine light."

A few days later, Julian picked me up in his car, a Toyota S.U.V., for a trip out to Montauk. He hadn't been out there for a couple of months, and he wanted to check on the progress of the new studio he's having built. Julian sat in front with Wilfredo, his driver, who is part of the largely Spanish-speaking Schnabel New York ménage. Julian wanted to play the newly released CD of the soundtrack for "Before Night Falls" on the car stereo, but he kept turning it off to make or receive calls on his cell phone, most of them regarding the movie's promotion and distribution. Spouting questions and rapid-fire technical details, he sounded like a producer. At one point, he spoke with Olatz at the dubbing studio; she was directing the dubbing of the Spanish-language version of the film, which would have its première in Madrid in late February. Olatz has told me that, if there was anything she could change about Julian, it would be the amount of time he spends on the telephone, and maybe also "his attachment to his things, his houses, his objects. When he was shooting the movie in Mexico, we had to send him his sheets and pillows. He wanted his feather pillows." Olatz plays Reinaldo Arenas's mother in the film. All five of Julian's children are in it, too, and so are Julian's parents, who are seen, briefly, as an elderly couple entering the apartment building where Reinaldo's friend Lázaro works as a doorman. "You know what my profession is, don't you?" Jack Schnabel said the other day, on the phone from Miami. "My profession is being Julian's father. All the people that have children should have a boy like that."

On the way to Montauk, Julian had Wilfredo turn off at Bridgehampton so that he could show me the house on Job's Lane where he had lived with Jacqueline, his first wife, and which she still owns and uses in the summer. From the front, it looked like an ordinary shingled house, closed up for the winter, but things got grander in back. Julian pointed out a massive stone wall he had built, with the help of a local mason, and an eighty-four-foot swimming pool he had dug; his twelve-foot-high bronze sculpture "Helen of Troy" stood guard at the far end. He showed me his wisteria and his rosebushes, and the bronze door handles that he had made himself, and the handprints that his daughters, Lola and Stella, had pressed into wet cement at the pool's shallow end. "I tried to invent a place for my kids so they would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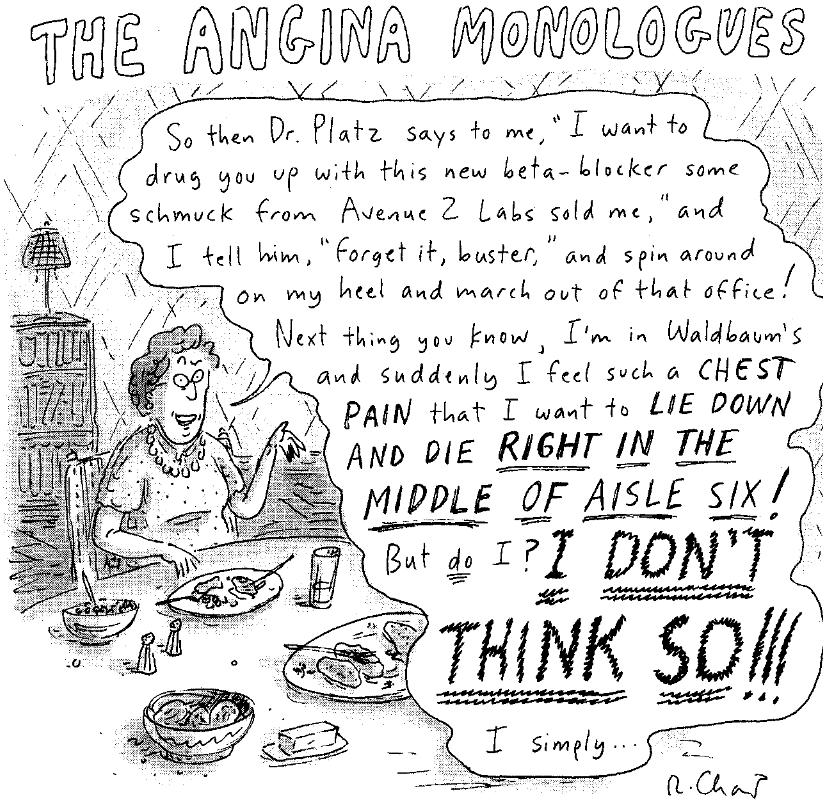
"Special Agent Vickers and I have a few questions for you, Ericson."


THE ANGINA MONOLOGUES
So then Dr. Platz says to me, "I want to drug you up with this new beta-blocker some schmuck from Avenue Z Labs sold me," and I tell him, "Forget it, buster," and spin around on my heel and march out of that office! Next thing you know, I'm in Waldbaum's and suddenly I feel such a CHEST PAIN that I want to LIE DOWN AND DIE RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF AISLE SIX! But do I? I DON'T THINK SO!!! I simply...
R. Chast

have the kind of memories I never had, of screened-in porches and things like that," he said. Both Lola and Stella used to ride on his shoulders in the studio while he painted. "I always watched him work, and he always encouraged me," Lola recalls. "Watching what he was thinking about go through his hand onto the canvas—that was something."

We stopped for lunch in the village of Montauk, at the Shagwong Restaurant. (A sign in the window read, "Piano Player Wanted. Must Have Knowledge of Opening Clams.") Julian's place was about ten minutes farther east, near the end of Long Island. He went first to the new studio, where six workmen were muscling huge rocks into position for a fireplace whose opening was six feet high. Julian walked me through the studio and out to the back, to his open-air painting arena—three sixteen-foot-high wood walls and, beyond them, a swimming pool even larger than the one in Bridgehampton, with an island at the far end that has two cherry trees growing on it. "This is where I live," he said happily. "I got the sky, I got these three walls to lean stuff on, and when I feel overheated I can jump in the pool." Swimming has been a big thing with Julian, since he was three and jumped into a swimming pool and had to be rescued by a lifeguard. His daughter Stella says, "The three things that relax my dad are 'The Godfather,' getting his back tickled, and floating in water."

The house, one of seven summer homes that the Stanford White firm built here in the early eighteen-eighties, is named Grandview. It sits on a hill overlooking the ocean, and it has three floors, ten bedrooms, an emphatic staircase, and a good many art works by Julian Schnabel. He bought the place in 1997, and he spends a lot of time here in the summer, painting and surfing and enjoying family life. Some people argue that Julian's real talent is for interior decorating—it's another way of dismissing him as a major artist—but the Montauk house is not nearly as theatrical inside as the house on West Eleventh Street, and Olatz had as much to do with decorating it as he did.

At dinner that night, in the dining room at Grandview, Julian talked about painting and filmmaking, and how the two processes are not all that different. "The director of photography on my film told me I never shot a scene that was rehearsed—I just shot the rehearsal," he said. "As long as it's unknown territory, I feel excited. That's the same in painting. I think often that I'm painting in time, not just composing within the rectangle. Travelling around in time has always been important to me, which is one of the reasons I like movies— Does your tummy hurt?" Noticing that I had a hand resting on my stomach, he was suddenly concerned about me. I said my tummy didn't hurt.

"Listen," he resumed, "painting has always gotten me out of trouble. It's gotten me into trouble, too, but it's always gotten me out. I sold a lot of art this year. Obviously, there are people interested in my painting, or I wouldn't be able to live in my house. All these years, I've been able to paint my way through pain and difficulty, and I've never had to compromise. I couldn't have afforded to go off and make this film if it hadn't been for my painting."

Schnabel was in Paris promoting his movie when he got the news about the 2001 Academy Award nominations. Javier Bardem had been nominated for best actor, for his performance in "Before Night Falls." There was a message from Schnabel on my answering machine, asking me to call him at the Ritz. "Well, you know," he said, when I reached him, "maybe there's a little justice in the world." He ran through the names of the other nominees—Tom Hanks, Russell Crowe, Geoffrey Rush, and Ed Harris—and said, "I think we got a pretty damn good chance of winning this thing. Isn't it insane? I'm very, very pleasantly surprised, because I really didn't expect it. I'm not the kind of person who wins awards—people think I have everything, so they don't want to give it to me."

He called two days later, from Saint-Moritz, where he was staying for a few days in a house owned by his Swiss dealer, Bruno Bischofberger. Box-office sales for "Before Night Falls" were up ninety per cent since the Academy Award nominations, he said. Rudi Fuchs, the director of the Stedelijk Museum, in Amsterdam, was talking about organizing a new Schnabel exhibition. "It's beautiful here," he added. "I'm making a really great painting. I'm still a kid, just getting warmed up." ♦

FICTION

U.F.O. IN KUSHIRO

BY HARUKI MURAKAMI

Five straight days she spent in front of the television, staring at crumbled banks and hospitals, whole blocks of stores in flames, severed rail lines and expressways. She never said a word. Sunk deep in the cushions of the sofa, her mouth clamped shut, she wouldn't answer when Komura spoke to her. She wouldn't shake her head or nod. Komura could not be sure that the sound of his voice was even getting through to her.

Komura's wife came from way up north in Yamagata, and, as far as he knew, she had no friends or relatives who could have been hurt in Kobe. Yet she stayed planted in front of the television from morning to night. When he got up, Komura would make his own toast and coffee, and head off to work. When he came home in the evening, he'd fix himself a snack with whatever he found in the refrigerator and eat it by himself. She'd still be glaring at the late news when he dropped off to sleep. In his presence, at least, she ate nothing and drank nothing and never went to the toilet. A stone wall of silence surrounded her. Komura gave up trying to break through.

And when he came home from work on Sunday, the sixth day, his wife had disappeared.

Komura was a salesman at one of the oldest audio-equipment stores in Tokyo's Akihabara "Electronics Town." He handled high-end stuff and earned a sizable commission whenever he made a sale. Most of his clients were doctors, wealthy independent businessmen, and rich provincials. He had been doing this for eight years and had earned a decent income right from the start. The economy was healthy, real-estate prices were rising, and Japan was overflowing with money. Wallets were bursting with ten-thousand-yen bills, and everyone was dying to spend them. The most expensive items were often the first to sell out.

Komura was tall and slim and a stylish dresser. He was good with people. In his bachelor days, he had dated a lot of women. But after getting married, at twenty-six, he found that his desire for sexual adventures simply—and mysteriously—vanished. He hadn't slept with any woman but his wife during the five years of their marriage. Not that the opportunity had never presented itself—but he had lost all interest in fleeting affairs and one-night stands. He much preferred to come home early, have a relaxed meal with his wife, talk with her awhile on the sofa, then go to bed and make love. This was everything he wanted.

Komura's friends were puzzled by his marriage. Next to his clean, classic looks, his wife could not have seemed more ordinary. She was short, with thick arms, and she had a dull, even stolid, appearance. And it wasn't just physical: there was nothing attractive about her personality, either. She rarely spoke, and her expression was often sullen.

Still, though he himself did not quite understand why, Komura always felt his tension dissipate when he and his wife were together under one roof; it was the only time he could truly relax. He slept well with her, undisturbed by the strange dreams that had troubled him in the past. His erections were hard; his sex life was warm. He no longer had to worry about death or venereal disease or the vastness of the universe.

His wife, on the other hand, disliked Tokyo's crowded urban life style and longed for Yamagata. She missed her parents and her two older sisters, and she would go home to see them whenever she felt the need. Her parents operated a successful inn, which kept them financially comfortable. Her father was crazy about his youngest daughter and happily paid her round-trip fares. Several times, Komura had come home from work to find his wife gone and a note on the kitchen table telling him that she would be visiting her parents for a while. He never objected. He just waited for her to come back, and she always did, after a week or ten days, in a good mood.

But the letter his wife had left for him five days after the earthquake was different: "I am never coming back," she had written, and gone on to explain simply but clearly why she no longer wanted to live with Komura. "The problem is that you never give me anything," she wrote. "Or, to put it more precisely, you have nothing inside you that you can give me. You are good and kind and handsome, but living with you is like living with a chunk of air. It's not your fault. There are lots of women who will fall in love with you. But please don't call me. Just get rid of the stuff I'm leaving behind."

Not that she had left much of anything behind. Her clothes, her shoes, her umbrella, her coffee mug, her hair dryer: all were gone. She must have packed them in boxes and shipped them out after he left for work that morning. The only things still in the house that could be called "her stuff" were the bicycle she used for shopping and a few books. The Beatles and Bill Evans CDs that Komura had been collecting since his bachelor days had also vanished.

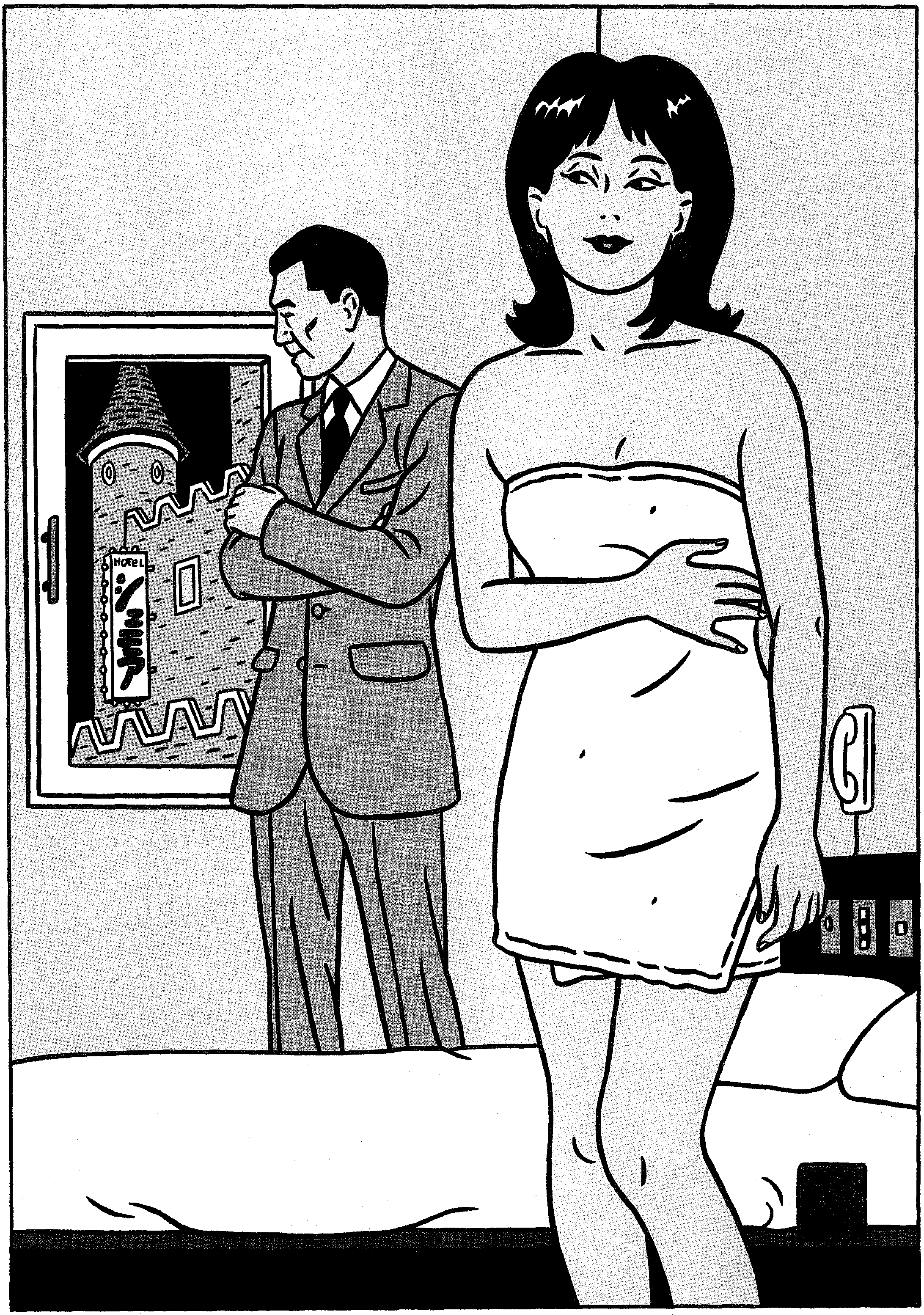
The next day, he tried calling his wife's parents' house in Yamagata. His mother-in-law answered the phone and told him that his wife didn't want to talk to him. She sounded somewhat apologetic. She also told him that his wife would be sending him the necessary divorce forms soon and that he should sign them and send them back right away.

Komura answered that he might not be able to send them back right away. This was an important matter, and he wanted time to think it over.

"You can think it over all you want, but I don't think that'll change anything," his mother-in-law said.

She was probably right, Komura

FLOCH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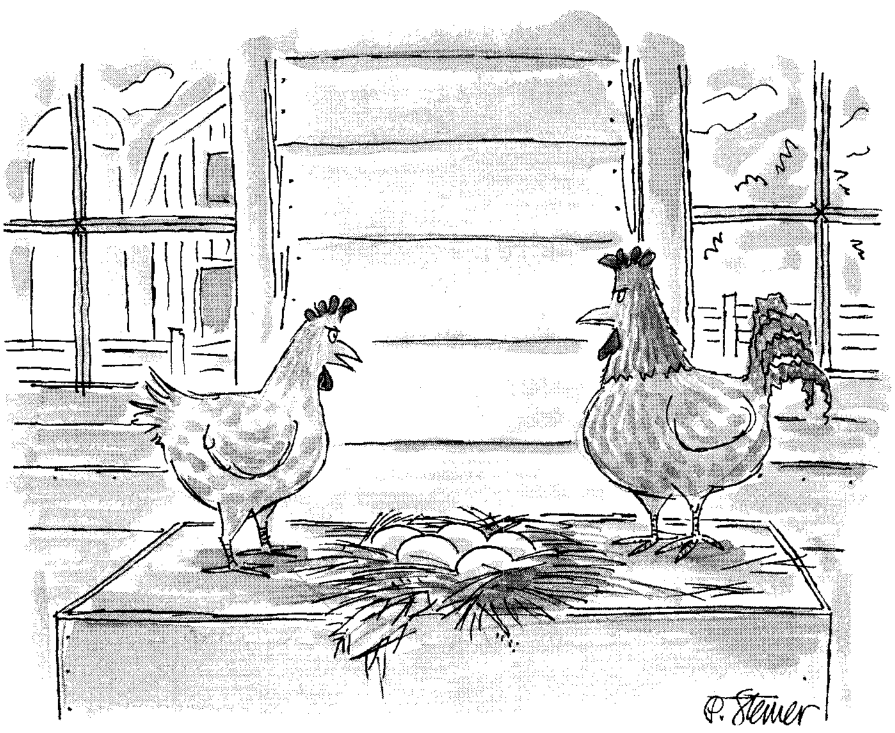


"They're not just my eggs. They're your eggs, too."

• •

thought. No matter how long he waited, things would never be the same. He was sure of that.

Shortly after he sent the papers back, Komura asked for a week off from work. February was a slow month, and he had already told his boss what was going on in his life. He had no trouble getting permission.

A colleague of Komura's named Sasaki came over to him at lunch and said, "I hear you're taking time off. Are you planning to do something?"

"I don't know," Komura said. "What *should* I do?"

Sasaki was a bachelor, three years younger than Komura. He had a delicate build and short hair, and he wore round, gold-rimmed glasses. He talked too much and had a certain overconfident air about him, which a lot of people disliked, but he got along well enough with the easygoing Komura.

"What the hell—as long as you're taking the time off, why not travel somewhere nice?"

"Not a bad idea," Komura said.

Wiping his glasses with his handkerchief, Sasaki peered at Komura as if examining him for some kind of clue.

"Have you ever been to Hokkaido?" he asked.

"Never," Komura said.

"Would you like to go?"

"Why do you ask?"

Sasaki narrowed his eyes and cleared his throat. "To tell the truth, I've got a small package I'd like to send to Kushiro, and I'm hoping you'll take it there for me. You'd be doing me a big favor, and I'd be glad to pay for the ticket. I could cover your hotel in Kushiro, too."

"A small package?"

"Like this," Sasaki said, shaping a four-inch cube with his hands. "Nothing heavy."

"Something to do with work?"

Sasaki shook his head. "Not at all," he said. "Strictly personal. I just don't want it to get knocked around, which is why I can't mail it. I'd like you to deliver it by hand, if possible. I really ought to do it myself, but I haven't had the time to fly all the way to Hokkaido."

"Is it something important?"

His closed lips curling slightly, Sasaki nodded. "It's nothing fragile, and there are no 'hazardous materials.' There's no need to worry about it. They're not going to stop you when they X-ray it at the airport. I promise I'm not going to get you in trouble. The only reason I'm not mailing it is I just don't *feel* like mailing it."

Hokkaido in February would be freezing cold, Komura knew, but cold or hot it was all the same to him.

"So who do I give the package to?"

"My sister. My younger sister. She lives up there."

Komura decided to accept Sasaki's offer. Thinking it over would have been too much trouble. He had no reason to refuse, and nothing else to do. Sasaki called the airline immediately and reserved a ticket for two days later.

At work the next day, he handed Komura a box like the ones used for human ashes, only smaller, wrapped in manila paper. Judging from the feel, it was made of wood. It weighed almost nothing. Broad strips of transparent tape were wrapped around the package, over the paper. Komura held it in his hands and studied it for a few seconds. He gave it a little shake, but he couldn't feel or hear anything moving inside.

"My sister will pick you up at the airport," Sasaki said. "She'll be arranging a room for you. All you have to do is meet her at the gate."

Komura left home with the box in his suitcase, wrapped in a thick shirt. The plane was far more crowded than he had imagined it would be. Why were all these people going from Tokyo to Kushiro in the middle of winter? he wondered.

The morning paper was full of earthquake reports. He read it from beginning to end on the plane. The number of dead was rising. Many areas were still without water and electricity, and countless people had lost their homes. Each article contained some new tragedy, but to Komura those tragedies registered as oddly lacking in depth. The aftermath of the earthquake was like a distant monotonous echo to him. The only thing he could give any serious thought to was his wife's drawing ever further away.

When he grew tired of thinking about his wife and of following the lines of type, he closed his eyes and napped. When he woke, he thought about his wife again. Why had she followed the earthquake reports with such intensity, from morning to night, without eating or sleeping? What had she seen that he didn't see?

Two young women wearing overcoats of similar design and color approached Komura at the airport. One was fair-skinned and maybe five feet six, with short hair. The area from her nose to her full upper lip was oddly extended, in a way that made Komura think of shorthaired hoofed animals. The other woman was closer to five feet one and would have been quite pretty if her nose hadn't been so small. Her long hair fell straight to her shoulders. Her ears were exposed, and there were two moles on her right earlobe which were emphasized by the earrings she wore. Both women looked to be in their mid-twenties. They took Komura to a café in the airport.

"I'm Keiko Sasaki," the taller woman said. "My brother told me how helpful you have been to him. This is my friend Shimao."

"Nice to meet you," Komura said.

"Hi," Shimao said.

"My brother tells me that your wife recently passed away," Keiko Sasaki said, with a respectful expression.

Komura waited a moment before answering, "No, she didn't die."

"I just talked to my brother the day before yesterday. I'm sure he said quite clearly that you had lost your wife."

"I did. She left me. But, as far as I know, she's alive and well."

"That's strange. I couldn't possibly have misheard something so important." She gave him an injured look. Komura put a small amount of sugar in his coffee and stirred it gently before taking a sip. The liquid was thin, with no taste to speak of. What the hell am I doing here? he wondered.

"Well, I guess I did mishear it. I can't imagine how else to explain the mistake," Keiko Sasaki said, apparently satisfied now. She drew in a deep breath and bit her lower lip. "Please forgive me. I was very rude."

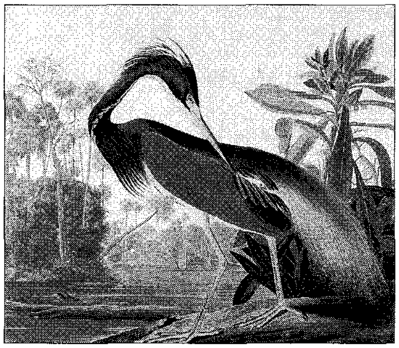
"Don't worry about it. Either way, she's gone."

Shimao said nothing while Komura and Keiko spoke, but she smiled and kept her eyes on Komura. She seemed to like him. He could tell from her expression and her subtle body language. A short silence fell over the three of them.

"Anyway, let me give you the important package I brought," Komura said. He unzipped his suitcase and pulled the box out of the folds of the thick shirt he had wrapped it in.

Keiko stretched her hands across the

AUDUBON
and the Art of
NATURAL HISTORY



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table, her expressionless eyes fixed on the package. After testing its weight, she did the same thing Komura had and gave it a few shakes by her ear. She flashed him a smile as if to signal that everything was fine, and slipped the box into her oversized shoulder bag.

"I have to make a call," she said. "Do you mind if I excuse myself for a moment?"

"Not at all," Komura said. "Feel free."

Keiko slung the bag over her shoulder and walked off toward a distant phone booth. Komura studied the way she walked. The upper half of her body was still, while everything from the hips down made large, smooth, mechanical movements. He had the impression that he was witnessing some moment from the past, shoved with random suddenness into the present.

"Have you been to Hokkaido before?" Shimao asked.

Komura shook his head.

"Yeah, I know. It's a long way to come."

Komura nodded. Then he turned to survey his surroundings. "Strange, though," he said, "sitting here like this, it doesn't feel as if I've come all that far."

"Because you flew. Those planes are too damn fast. Your mind can't keep up with your body."

"You may be right."

"Did you want to make such a long trip?"

"I guess so," Komura said.

"Because your wife left?"

Komura nodded.

"No matter how far you travel, you can never get away from yourself," Shimao said.

Komura was staring at the sugar bowl on the table as she spoke, but then he raised his eyes to hers.

"It's true," he said. "No matter how far you travel, you can never get away from yourself. It's like your shadow. It follows you everywhere."

Shimao looked hard at Komura. "I bet you loved her, didn't you?"

Komura dodged the question. "You're a friend of Keiko Sasaki's?"

"Right. We do stuff together."

"What kind of stuff?"

Instead of answering him, Shimao asked, "Are you hungry?"

"I don't know," Komura said. "I feel kind of hungry and kind of not."

"Let's go and have something warm, the three of us. Eating something warm will help you relax."

Shimao drove a small four-wheel-drive Subaru. Keiko Sasaki sat next to Shimao, and Komura had the cramped rear seat to himself. There was nothing particularly wrong with Shimao's driving, but the noise in the back was terrible, and the suspension was nearly shot. The car had to have more than a hundred thousand miles on it. The automatic transmission slammed into gear whenever it downshifted, and the heater blew hot and cold. Shutting his eyes, Komura imagined that he had been imprisoned in a washing machine.

No snow had been allowed to accumulate on the streets in Kushiro, but dirty, icy mounds stood at random intervals on both sides of the road. Dense clouds hung low, and, although it was not yet sunset, everything was dark and desolate. The wind tore through the city in sharp squeals. There were no people out walking. Even the traffic lights looked frozen.

"This is one part of Hokkaido that doesn't get much snow," Keiko explained in a loud voice, looking back at Komura. "We're on the coast, and the wind is strong, so whatever piles up gets blown away. It's cold, though, *freezing* cold. Sometimes it feels like it's taking your ears off."

"You hear about drunks who freeze to death sleeping on the street," Shimao said.

"Do you get bears around here?" Komura asked.

Keiko giggled and turned to Shimao. "Bears!"

Shimao gave the same kind of giggle.

"I don't know much about Hokkaido," Komura said by way of excuse.

"I know a good story about bears," Keiko said. "Right, Shimao?"

"A *great* story!" Shimao said.

But their talk broke off at that point, and neither of them told the bear story. Komura didn't ask to hear it. Soon they reached their destination, a big noodle shop on the highway. They parked in the lot and went inside.

Komura had a beer and a hot bowl of ramen noodles. The place was dirty and empty, and the chairs and tables were rickety, but the ramen was terrific, and when he had finished eating Komura did, in fact, feel more relaxed.

"Tell me, Mr. Komura," Keiko said, "do you have something you want to do in Hokkaido? My brother says you're going to spend a week here."

Komura thought about it for a moment but couldn't come up with anything that he wanted to do.

"How about a hot spring? I know a little country place not far from here."

"Not a bad idea," Komura said.

"I'm sure you'd like it. It's really nice. No bears or anything."

The two women looked at each other and laughed again.

"Do you mind if I ask you about your wife?" Keiko asked.

"I don't mind."

"When did she leave?"

"Hmm . . . five days after the earthquake, so that's more than two weeks ago now."

"Did it have something to do with the earthquake?"

Komura shook his head. "Probably not. I don't think so."

"Still, I wonder if things like that aren't connected somehow," Shimao said with a tilt of her head.

"Yeah," Keiko said. "It's just that you can't see how."

"Right," Shimao said. "Stuff like that happens all the time."

"Stuff like what?" Komura asked.

"Like, say, what happened with somebody I know," Keiko said.

"You mean Mr. Saeki?" Shimao asked.

"Exactly," Keiko said. "There's this guy—Saeki. He lives in Kushiro. He's about forty years old. A hair stylist. His wife saw a U.F.O. last year. She was driving on the edge of town all by herself in the middle of the night and she saw a huge U.F.O. land in a field. *Whoosh!* Like in 'Close Encounters.' A week later, she left home. Just disappeared and never came back. They weren't having any domestic problems or anything."

"And it was because of the U.F.O.?" Komura asked.

"I don't know why. She just up and left. No note or anything. She had two kids in elementary school, and she just walked out. Not a word from her since," Keiko said. "The whole week before she left, all she'd do was tell people about the U.F.O. You couldn't get her to stop. She'd just go on and on about how big and beautiful it was."

She paused to let the story sink in.

"My wife left a note," Komura said. "And we don't have any kids."

"So your situation's a little better than Saeki's," Keiko said.

"Yeah. Kids make a big difference," Shimao said, nodding.

"Shimao's father left home when she was seven," Keiko explained with a frown. "Ran off with his wife's younger sister."

A silence settled over the group.

"Maybe Mr. Saeki's wife didn't run away but was captured by an alien from the U.F.O.," Komura said, to change the subject.

"It's possible," Shimao said with a sombre expression. "You hear stories like that all the time."

"You mean like you're-walking-along-the-street-and-a-bear-eats-you kind of thing?" Keiko asked. The two women laughed.

The three of them left the noodle shop and went to a nearby love hotel. It was on the edge of town, on a strange street where love hotels alternated with gravestone dealers. The hotel Shimao had chosen was an odd building, constructed to look like a European castle. A triangular red flag flew on its highest tower.

Keiko got the key at the front desk, and they took the elevator to the room. The windows were tiny, compared with the absurdly big bed. Komura hung his down jacket on a hanger and went into the toilet. During the few minutes that he was gone, the two women managed to run a bath, dim the lights, turn up the heat, turn on the television, examine the delivery menus from local restaurants, test the light switches at the head of the bed, and check the contents of the minibar.

"The owners are friends of mine," Keiko said. "I had them get a big room ready. It's a love hotel, but don't let that bother you. You're not bothered, are you?"

"Not at all," Komura said.

"I thought this would make a lot more sense than sticking you in a cramped little room in some cut-rate business hotel by the station."

"I'm sure you're right," Komura said.

"Why don't you take a bath? I filled the tub."

Komura did as he was told. The tub was huge. Komura felt almost uneasy soaking in it alone. The couples who came to this hotel probably took baths together.

When he emerged from the bathroom, Komura was surprised to see that Keiko Sasaki had left. Shimao was still there, drinking beer and watching TV.

"Keiko went home," Shimao said. "She wanted me to apologize and tell you that she'll be back tomorrow morning. Do you mind if I stay here a little while and have a beer?"

"No," Komura said.

"You're sure it's no problem? Like, you want to be alone, or you can't relax if somebody else is around or something?"

Komura insisted that it was no problem. Drinking his beer and drying his hair with a towel, he watched TV with Shimao. It was a news special on the Kobe earthquake. The same images appeared again and again: tilted buildings, buckled streets, tearful old women, confusion, and aimless anger. When a commercial came on, Shimao used the remote to switch off the TV.

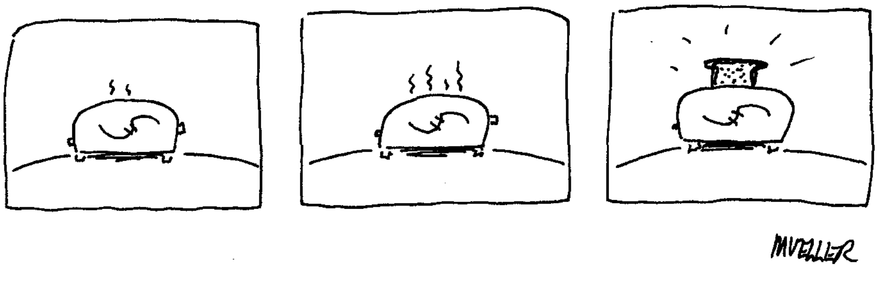
"Let's talk," she said, "as long as we're here."

"Fine," Komura said.

"What should we talk about?"

"In the car, you and Keiko said some-

THE COMPLETE HISTORY OF TOAST



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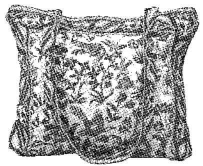
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thing about a bear, remember? You said it was a great story."

"Oh, yeah," she said, nodding. "The bear story."

"You want to tell it to me?"

"Sure, why not?"

Shimao got a fresh beer from the refrigerator and filled both their glasses.

"It's a little raunchy," she said. "You don't mind?"

Komura shook his head. "No, go ahead."

"I mean, some men don't like hearing a woman tell certain kinds of stories."

"I'm not like that."

"It's something that actually happened to me, so it's a little embarrassing."

"I'd like to hear it if you're O.K. with it."

"I'm O.K.," Shimao said, "if you're O.K."

"I'm O.K.," Komura said.

"Three years ago—back around the time I started college—I was dating this guy. He was a year older than me, and he was the first guy I had sex with. One day, the two of us were out hiking—in the mountains way up north." Shimao took a sip of beer. "It was fall, and the hills were full of bears. That's the time of year when the bears are getting ready to hibernate, so they're out looking for food and they're really dangerous. Sometimes they attack people. They'd done an awful job on a hiker three days before we went out. So somebody gave us a bell to carry with us. We were supposed to shake it while we walked to warn the bears that there were people around. Bears don't attack people on purpose. I mean, they're pretty much vegetarians. They don't *have* to attack people. What happens is they suddenly bump into people in their territory and they get surprised or angry and they attack out of reflex. If you walk along ringing your bell, they'll avoid you. Get it?"

"I get it."

"So that's what we were doing, walking along and ringing the bell. We got to this place where there was nobody else around, and all of a sudden he said he wanted to . . . do it. I kind of liked the idea, too, so I said O.K., and we went into this bushy place off the trail where nobody could see us, and we spread out a piece of plastic. But I was afraid of the bears. I mean, think how awful it would be to have some bear attack you from behind and kill you while you're having sex! I would never want to die that way. Would you?"

Komura agreed that he would not want to die that way.

"So there we were, shaking the bell with one hand and having sex. Kept it up from start to finish. *Ding-a-ling! Ding-a-ling!*"

"Which one of you shook the bell?"

"We took turns. We'd trade off when our hands got tired. It was so weird, shaking this bell the whole time we were doing it! I think about it sometimes even now, when I'm having sex, and I start laughing."

Komura gave a little laugh, too.

Shimao clapped her hands. "Oh, that's wonderful," she said. "You can laugh, after all!"

"Of course I can laugh," Komura said, but, come to think of it, this was the first time he had laughed in quite a while. When was the last time?

"Do you mind if I take a bath, too?" Shimao asked.

"No," Komura said.

While she was bathing, Komura watched a variety show m.c.'d by a comedian with a loud voice. He didn't find it the least bit funny, but he couldn't tell whether that was the show's fault or his own. He drank a beer and opened a packet of nuts from the minibar. Shimao stayed in the bath for a very long time. Finally, she came out wearing nothing but a towel and sat on the edge of the bed. Dropping the towel, she slid between the sheets like a cat and lay there staring at Komura.

"When was the last time you did it with your wife?" she asked.

"At the end of December, I think."

"And nothing since?"

"Nothing."

"Not with anybody?"

Komura closed his eyes and nodded.

"You know what I think," Shimao said. "You need to lighten up and learn to enjoy life a little more. I mean, think about it: tomorrow there could be an earthquake; you could be kidnapped by aliens; you could be eaten by a bear. Nobody knows what's going to happen."

"Nobody knows what's going to happen," Komura echoed.

"*Ding-a-ling*," Shimao said.

After several failed attempts to have sex with Shimao, Komura gave up. This had never happened to him before.

"You must have been thinking about your wife," Shimao said.

"Yup," Komura said, but in fact what he had been thinking about was the earthquake. Images of it had come to him one after another, as if in a slide show, flashing on the screen and fading away. Highways, flames, smoke, piles of rubble. He couldn't break the chain of silent images.

Shimao pressed her ear against his naked chest.

"These things happen," she said.

"Uh-huh."

"You shouldn't let it bother you."

"I'll try not to," Komura said.

"Men always let it bother them, though."

Komura said nothing.

Shimao played with his nipple.

"You said your wife left a note, didn't you?"

"I did."

"What did it say?"

"That living with me was like living with a chunk of air."

"A chunk of air?" Shimao tilted her head back to look up at Komura. "What does that mean?"

"That there's nothing inside me, I guess."

"Is it true?"

"Could be," Komura said. "I'm not sure, though. I may have nothing inside me, but what would *something* be?"

"Yeah, really, come to think of it. What *would* something be? My mother was crazy about salmon skin. She always used to wish that there were a kind of salmon that was made of nothing but skin. So there may be some cases when it's better to have nothing inside. Don't you think?"

Komura tried to imagine what a salmon made of nothing but skin would be like. But even supposing there were such a thing, wouldn't the skin itself be the something inside? Komura took a deep breath, raising and then lowering Shimao's head on his chest.

"I'll tell you this, though," Shimao said. "I don't know whether you've got nothing or something inside you, but I think you're terrific. I'll bet the world is full of women who would understand you and fall in love with you."

"It said that, too."

"What? Your wife's note?"

"Uh-huh."

"No kidding," Shimao said. Her earring rubbed against the skin of his chest.

"Come to think of it," Komura said, "what's the something inside that box I brought up here?"

"Is that bothering you?"

"It wasn't bothering me before. But now, I don't know, it's starting to."

"Since when?"

"Just now."

"All of a sudden?"

"Yeah, once I started thinking about it, all of a sudden."

"I wonder why it's started to bother you now, all of a sudden."

Komura stared at the ceiling for a minute. "I wonder."

The two listened to the moaning of the wind. The wind came from someplace unknown to Komura, and it blew past, to another place unknown to him.

"I'll tell you why," Shimao said in a low voice. "It's because that box contains the something that was inside you. You didn't know that when you carried it here and gave it to Keiko with your own hands. Now you'll never get it back."

Komura lifted himself from the mattress and looked down at the woman. Tiny nose, moles on her earlobe. In the room's silence, his heart beat with a loud, dry sound. His bones cracked as he leaned forward. For a split second, Komura felt as if he were on the verge of committing an act of incredible violence.

"Just kidding," Shimao said, when she saw the look on his face. "I said the first thing that popped into my head. It was a lousy joke. I'm sorry. Don't take it personally. I didn't mean to hurt you."

Komura forced himself to calm down and sank his head into his pillow again. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath. The huge bed stretched out around him like a nocturnal sea. His heart was still pounding.

"Are you starting to feel a *little* as if you've come a long way?" Shimao asked.

"Hmm. Now I feel as if I've come a very long way," Komura answered honestly.

Shimao traced a complicated design on Komura's chest with her fingertip, as if casting a magic spell.

"But really," she said, "you're just at the beginning." ♦

(*Translated, from the Japanese, by Jay Rubin.*)

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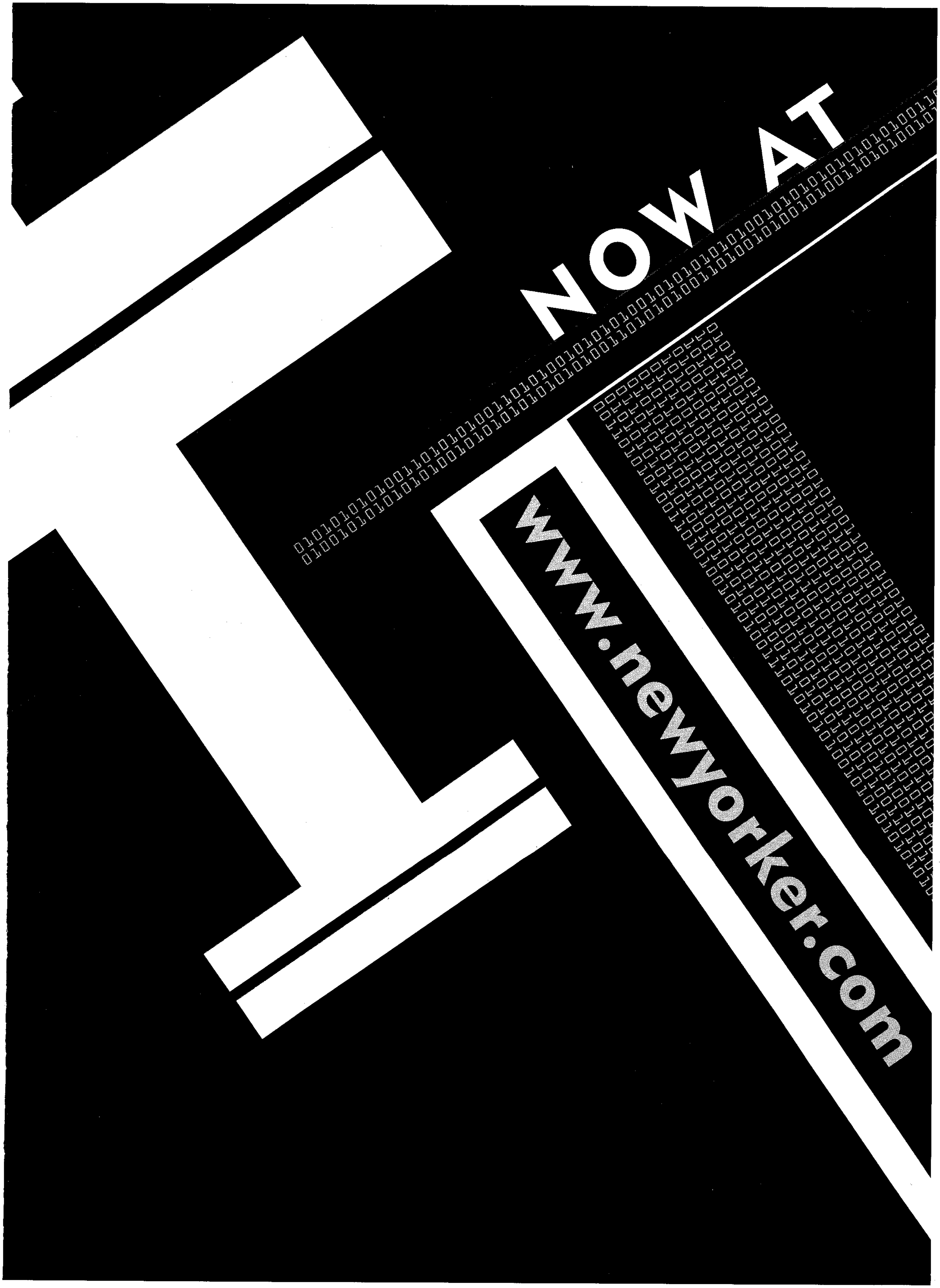
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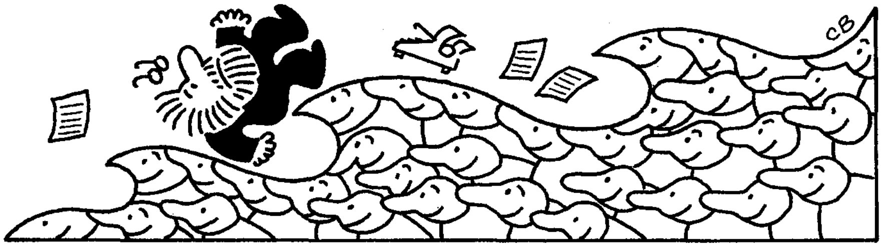


IN FASHION

COMBAT FATIGUE

The Devil made me buy that dress.

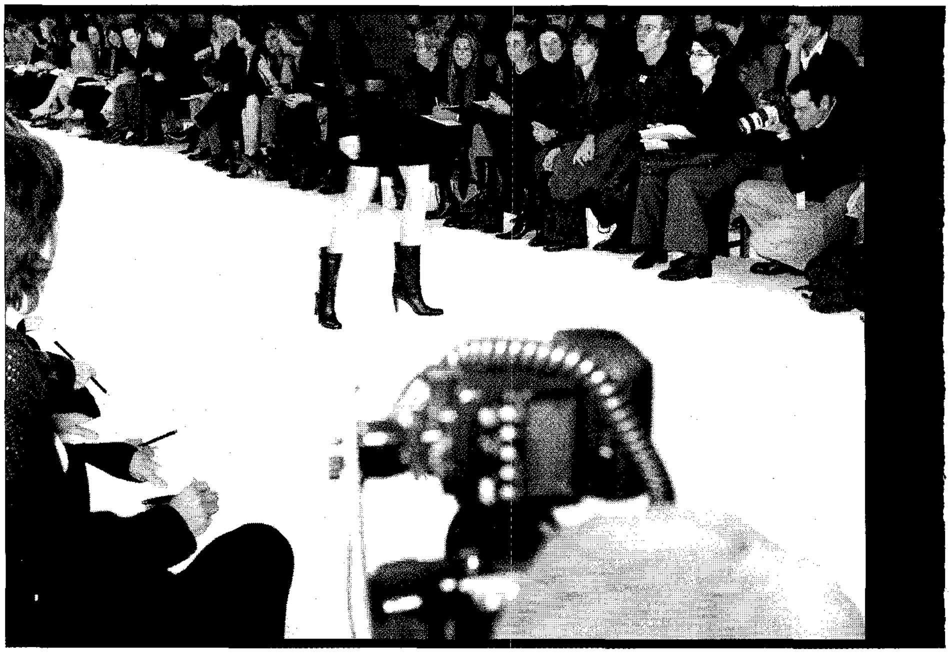
BY JUDITH THURMAN

I was not a better person the morning after New York Fashion Week. I wouldn't have been surprised to find some strange augury of alien metamorphosis on my body: a third nipple, a patch of scales, a bar-code tattoo. From the grandstands during six days of runway shows, I had, I calculated, reviewed some two thousand ensembles. They might just as well have been light infantry, or an armored-tank division. The clothes were a blur of ruched silk jersey and harness leather; of fuchsia sheepskin and vintage lace. I could barely remember what I'd worn myself.

This amnesia was less troubling to me—I knew I could refresh my memory of the collections on the Internet and of my own *toilettes* from the dry cleaner's receipt—than the shock to my dulled receptors, moral and aesthetic, when I picked up the New York *Times Magazine* and realized that I had mistaken the cover photo of a heroic African nurse in the Ebola ward of a hospital in Uganda for one of Miguel Adrover's models.

A few seasons ago, Adrover, an immigrant from Majorca, was working out of a Lower East Side basement. On the basis of two collections, which included garments cut from the late Quentin Crisp's dirty mattress and an old Burberry raincoat, as well as some sportswear of provocative sobriety, he found a backer and became a phenom. Suspecting, perhaps, that those perverse gourmets who delight in dining on fashion's young would be whetting their knives for him, he chose to show his line for Fall 2001 at the old Essex Street meat-and-produce market.

It was a lupine night of bone-chilling wind. Although many spectators were turned away by the police, I was swept inside by the first wave of arrivals. The interior of the market had been artfully tented in ravaged canvas, and I recognized the waxy ambient perfume not as incense, though some was burning, but as kerosene from a space heater. Since there was only one obvious means of egress, and four hundred bodies pressed against it, this was disheartening.



Resurgence of the mini at Calvin Klein; Imitation of Christ models in a gathered chiffon

Visibility was so low in the yellow tungsten gloom that the clothes got to command more attention than the celebrities, if there were any, in the front row, wherever that was. Adrover's theme was "Meeteast"—the message on the coffee-stained cocktail napkin that had served as his invitation—signifying, one inferred, East Village, meet Middle East. The designer and his business partner had spent six months soaking up inspiration in Egypt (a heartfelt thank-you to his friends in Luxor was included with the program notes), and also, apparently, a little time at Talbot's.

"Osama bin Laden as fashion icon," drawled a retailer on the refectory bench behind me when the show finally started, though this wasn't quite fair. A trancelike parade of traditional Arab, colonial, and missionary garments that blurred gender distinctions was punctuated by a raincoat patterned with Stars of David made from masking tape. A Vuitton satchel balanced on a model's wrapped head overflowed with fresh lettuce. Clones in the full Talbot—blouse, blazer, and A-line skirt—teetered blindly down the runway in black head shrouds, like the cloth over a parrot's cage that stifles its squawking. Sumptuous robes of great dignity, which is to say no sex appeal, were cut from coarse, grease-stained duck or recycled sackcloth, as if to remind us that a billion Third World women have no change of clothes: that one all-purpose garment serves for field work, housework, worship, and celebration.

Yet it wasn't all anthropology. There

was real modernity in a series of supple cable knits, including a floor-length skirt that swirled like the petticoat of a dervish, and in whip-smart military jackets layered over voluminous tunics and *shalwar-kameez*-style leggings—evoking the way immigrants from hot Muslim countries dress for a northern winter, or a woman dragged from a fire on a cold night throws her rescuer's parka over her nightgown. And if the victims of the fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory were never far from my mind on that particular cold night, it is also true that Adrover has something eloquent to say about a common plight, perhaps even in the fashion world: that of strong, hardworking women with stressed, imperfect bodies who need a sheath for their fragility.

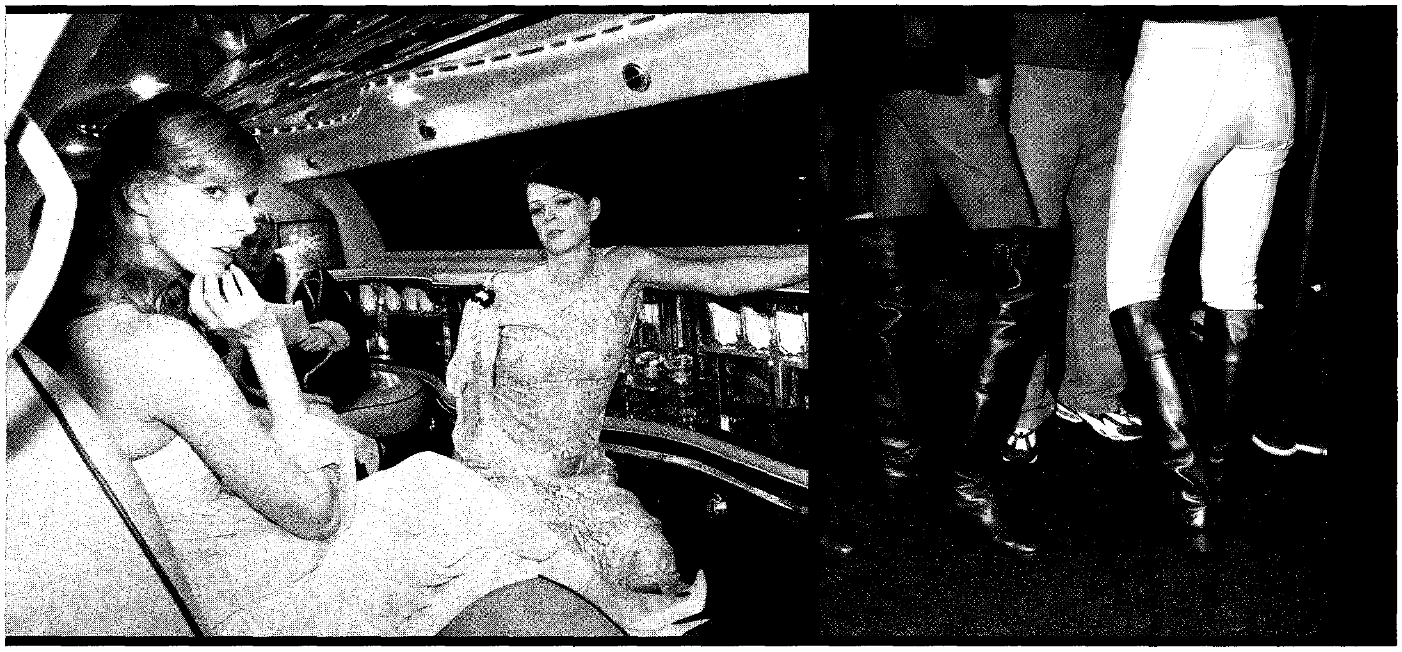
The fragility of strong women: I can imagine Colette chortling at the concept, and not kindly. For her, the male was always the weaker and nobler creature, while the voracious female monopolizes the will to survive. It would have been fun to take her—as a writer of African descent who, though she despised identity politics, was an avid connoisseur of bad boys, hot mamas, sensational trials, virile plumage, rippling muscles, puerile exhibitionism, demimondes, and "love's barbarism"—to the Sean John show. Sean John is the eponymous line of menswear designed by Sean (Puffy) Combs, the hip-hop and fashion mogul whose trial for weapons possession and attempted bribery of a witness had been under way for two weeks.

On the morning of the show, I had driven my son, who was turning twelve, and some friends to play paintball on Staten Island. The paintball fields, which resemble a militia training camp, lie in a wooded hollow next to a state prison. It's a landscape of razor wire and garbage dunes, overgrown with marsh grass and scoured by gulls. A dozen or so excited young warriors, mostly from the outer boroughs, were already gearing up for mock combat when we arrived—the target demographic for Puffy's line of thermals, cargo pants, and bleached denims.

After signing releases with a certain guilty trepidation, I tethered my bewildered Standard poodle to the rank of Portosans behind the picnic tent. Then the boys and I were issued our rented weapons, ammo belts, CO_2 cannisters, and camouflage jumpsuits. Had I known how voguish these would look later in the week at the Pierrot show—a kooky tribute by a fey Frenchman, Pierre Carrilero, to macho American backwoods folklore, which also featured a life-size rubber bear, Blair Witch sound effects, a naked blond Native American in a dream catcher, and a fetching knitwear *hommage* to Waco and the N.R.A.—I might have bought one.

We moved along to a staging area for the safety briefing. Our referee was wearing mirrored Revos, olive drabs—a ubiquitous fall color—an orange safety vest, and a chunky version of the combat boots shown by Calvin Klein on bare-legged models in desirable shearling minidresses and cropped peacoats. "Keep your mask lowered at all times," he told us, "and if you shoot anyone at point-blank range, you—and your crew—are out." It was good advice for the days to come.

The fashion professionals, of whom I am not one, were nearly unanimous in proclaiming that many accomplished and salable clothes but few trends of significance emerged from the collections. New York does not have its Nicolas Ghesquière, its Rei Kawakubo, or its Alaïa. Some of the most notable shows were those of foreigners who have settled in the city, like Narciso Rodriguez, a Cuban-American from New Jersey, or of natives who have left it, like Marc Jacobs, who lives in Paris. Jacobs showed his grasp of French coquetry in tidy little *belle du jour* dresses with pleats or ruffles and sheer bodices with trompe-l'oeil collars that were just slightly dishevelled—as if their owner had rushed off in haste after a *cinq à sept* to meet her husband for dinner. But I also couldn't help feeling that Jacobs's sojourn in France has made him a trifle too sexually optimistic on behalf of an American client. Ask Helmut Lang's woman: after thirty-five, there's no point in flirting like



prom dress and a vintage lace gown; booted equestriennes at Michael Kors. Photographs by Andrea Artz.

that here. Lang, a cerebral Austrian with a sooty palette, perfectly understands the seduction of withholding. His sibylline garments pose the question "What's your fantasy?" and then refuse to answer it.

Like Adrover, but much more abstractly, Lang was playing with the notion of a life lived 24/7 in one three-tiered outfit: a severe jacket over a longer, filmy chiffon wrapper and slim trousers, worn with the hottest footwear on the runways—a pointy black suède bondage boot with a spatlike, cutout instep. The woman who leaves for her office or gallery dressed like this in the morning has no idea when, if, or with whom she is coming home, or of what surprises the day will bring, but she has covered all the bases of *leben und arbeiten.*

It was remarkable, though, how many designers—even the aloof Lang, who was also into thongs and drapery—had succumbed to the influence of the costumes from "Gladiator," a story, when you think about it, that could serve as a parable for the modelling business. Every few seasons, a fresh batch of impossibly gorgeous human specimens, the more exotic the better, are recruited in the provinces and shipped to the glittering, corrupt imperial capital for a brief reign of glory. The new hopes are buffed, exercised, oiled, coiffed, painted, garbed, and hyped by their wranglers to arouse the most primitive lusts of a populace with a short attention span and a fickle appetite for sensation. They quickly adopt a defiant stare and swaggering gait. The plebes treat them familiarly—both as fodder and as idols. The patricians decide their fate.

If there was no fire to the collections, there was still a smoldering atmosphere of decline and fall, as if the Zip Codes of Manhattan were small, embattled post-colonial encampments, each ruled by a style lord or a clan and competing for legitimacy. Obscure design collectives issued manifestos. Military silhouettes, colors—even hardware—were everywhere one looked. So was a barbarian glamour that the irrepressible Simon Doonan dubbed "*haute sauvagerie.*" Anna Sui showed convict stripes. In a Chelsea auto-body shop, under fluorescent lights, Sonja Rubin and Kip Chapelle served bottled beer from a trash can, while photographers huddled beneath the carcass of a taxi from which no one, surely, had emerged alive. The interesting clothes looked dreamy and bruised, as if they had been salvaged from the wreck.

The loft space overlooking the Hudson River rented by Daryl K. was flooded with pulsating red bordello light and orgasmic music. Her runway was long enough for the sort of aircraft that drop off the arms, drugs, and contraband Prada bowling bags which help finance a coup. The models all looked a little like camp followers—adorably half dressed in the soldiers' clothes, which they flaunted like booty. One of them wore a white shirt with the F.B.I.'s sketch of the Unabomber printed on the back. (The point of reference seemed to be his hood.)

There were tomtoms at Donna Karan, and I found her theme a little too percussive as well: the "modern urban warrior." Karan's legions wore "slashed nubuck," "ravaged layers of metallic chiffon," and a "savage shearling body bag," accessorized with "tusk body pins" by Robert Lee Morris; i.e., belts. None of this *Sturm* was at heart any more subversive than the wryer, less ambitious, more assured collection that Diane von Furstenberg showed at home in her converted West Village carriage house. Like their creator—newly married—the tart pleated skirts in tweed, with chiffon insets, and the molten silk jerseys seemed to purr with an air of mature feline contentment.

The charm of Karan's clothes is inert, at least to me, until they react with a woman's body, and then one understands the loyalty they inspire. Off the runway, in motion, stressed by the bumps of modern life, they have much more of an undercarriage than the tinny blather that promotes them. Unfortunately, Karan placed copies of her spring ad catalogue, entitled "Woman to Woman," on the bleachers at her show. The catalogue was shot on location in Vietnam, with Jeremy Irons and Milla Jovovich playing sexual tourists. In one image, Jovovich models a rumpled white linen jacket whose cut alludes to those good old days when the country was still Indochine. In the same frame, slightly out of focus, a peasant woman with a heavy basket, wearing the jacket's prototype, stares at Jovovich with an unfeigned expression of pain and incomprehension from the shadows of her paper coolie hat. Outside

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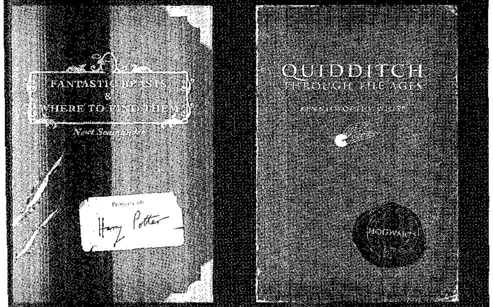
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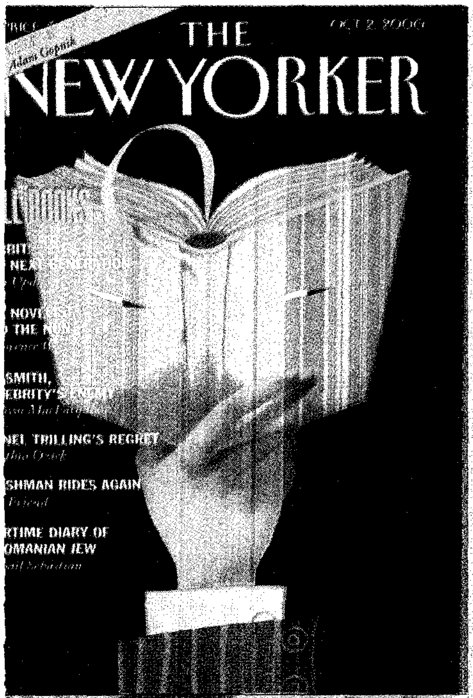
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THE
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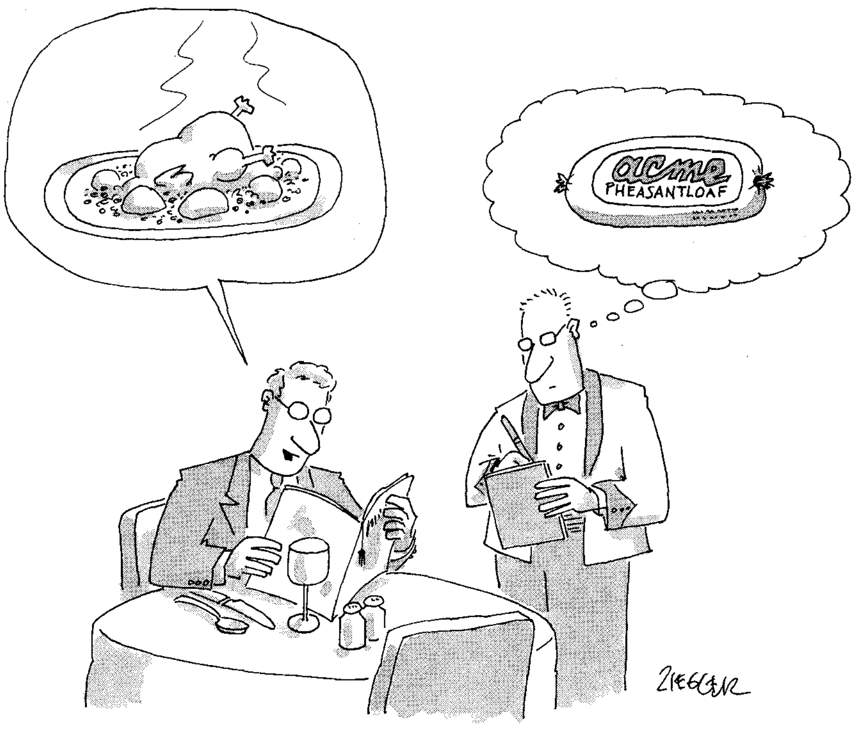
on Sixth Avenue, labor activists picketing the show were distributing leaflets that alleged "slavelike conditions" for women workers in "Karan sweatshops." The motto of their campaign was "Ain't I a Woman?"



There were many small triumphs of virtuosity during Fashion Week: Behnaz Sarafpour's bolero of black satin roses; the wrap coats at Geoffrey Beene; Douglas Hobbs's molded leather camisole; a flapper's dance dress of leather and chiffon strips from Badgley Mischka; and pretty much the whole Bruce collection. But the shows that generated the greatest buzz—controversy would be too strong a word—laid claim, with varying degrees of hubris, naïveté, or conviction, to an old-fashioned, even Marxist moral high ground, celebrating the "authenticity" of traditional and tribal cultures; of street and club kids; of flower power; of erotic militants and champions of the proletariat. The Old Guard, in the meantime, and particularly the courtly Latin Americans, Oscar and Carolina, seemed intent on dressing the partygoers in "Exterminating Angel," while Ralph Lauren and Michael Kors—Kors to a soundtrack of hoofbeats—concentrated on racy britches and cashmere horse blankets for the Four Polo Players of the Apocalypse. Despite the resurgence of the miniskirt, it was not exactly 1968—no *imagination au pouvoir*. But the divides of age, class, and ethnicity seemed to be deepening.

Tara Subkoff and Matt Damhave, two enfants terribles who call their company Imitation of Christ (after a song by the Psychedelic Furs), made sniping at the marketplace from the heights of purity into a pre-dinner recreation. With the help of Chloë Sevigny, their "creative director," they turn out a tiny collection of irreverently tweaked vintage rags—clothes, in other words, that they may have created but didn't make, and that are sold through outlets like Barneys and Louis Boston with price tags of four figures.

The invitation to their show, at the Beekman Theatre, solicited contributions to Free the Children and Sweatshop Watch, two humanitarian labor groups that their profits apparently help to underwrite. My own shop rules obliged me to refuse the collection plate, and when I was offered a brown paper goody bag by one of the ushers I was leery of that, too—having read, in their "Communiqué Number III," that "ignorance is not bliss for those who bleed in the name of future bargains." Suppose the bag contained a severed finger? Luckily, there was just free nail polish.

The "event" that followed was a silent video-vérité, in extreme closeup, of the peevish audience arriving for the show, which segued rather charmingly into the emergence of Chloë Sevigny and the models from a stretch S.U.V. They vamped the clothes—some ravishing, even sublime, and others hideous beyond description—and then we all settled down to an amateur film of staggering pretentiousness indebted to Godard (is there any other kind?), which took aim not only at the despicable fashion bourgeoisie in the theatre but at the abuses of multinational capitalism and the decadence of Western civilization.

Communiqué Number IV, Jesus to Matt and Tara: Welcome to Heaven, kids. Now that you've made it through the needle's eye, learn how to sew.

Puffy Combs, a man who hedges his bets, tried to dominate the battlefield from both positions, high and low. "I wanted to be the best-dressed motherfucker on the block," he told his audience in a recorded voice-over that explained his motives for going into the fashion business. That sounded like a reasonable ambition until he sent his models down the catwalk wrapped in, or dragging, the skins of more slaughtered creatures than Teddy Roosevelt ever shipped back from Kenya to the American Museum of Natural History, and with slogans painted on the boys' bare chests: "black power" on a white torso; "revolution" on a black one. A simultaneous projection spliced clips from civil-rights riots, nuclear explosions, and a sex-education documentary with shots of Che Guevara, Eldridge Cleaver, Jimmy Carter (poster boy for the cardigan), the Reverend King's galvanic oratory, and Jennifer Lopez's latest music video, "Love Don't Cost a Thing."

The coincidence of so much thuggish splendor and anarchic posturing with so much private security left me a little cowed, like the lap dog in the arms of Kimora Lee. But it also defined, in retrospect, the mood of the whole week: its surly festiveness, its tawdry sparkle, its flashes of inspired improvisation, its claustrophobia, and perhaps also its message: "Escape from New York." ♦

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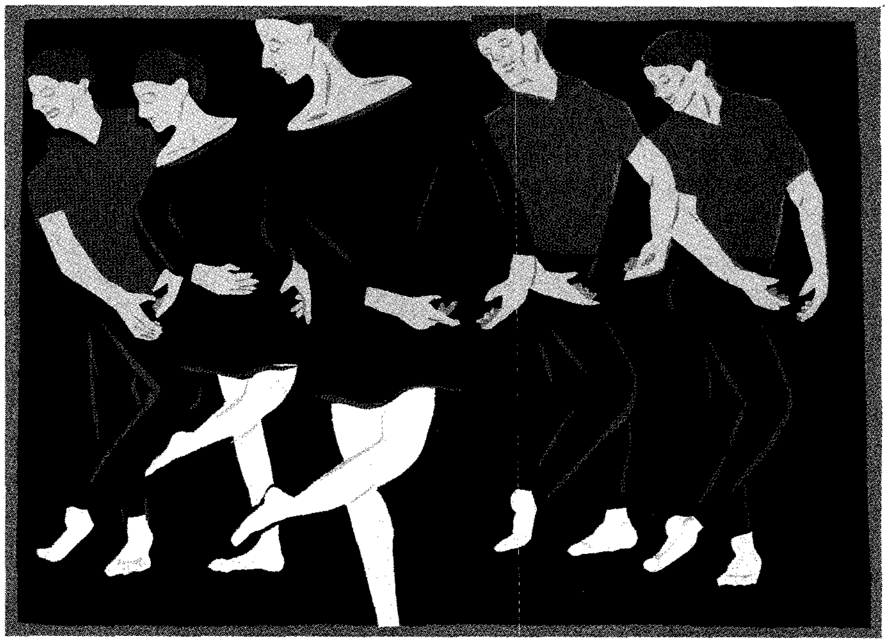
DANCING

GROWING UP

Mark Morris's twentieth-anniversary season.

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

One day last month, Barry Alterman, the general director of the Mark Morris Dance Group, took me through the big, white, six-million-dollar building that the company has built for itself, with city, private, and institutional donations, across the street from the Brooklyn Academy of Music. He showed me the vast, pillared space that takes up most of the first and second floors. He hopes this will house a music club or restaurant, which will help the company pay its bills and help the rest of us find a bite to eat after BAM shows, something that has not been easy to do in the past. We saw the third floor, with offices, showers, and dressing rooms. ("That's where the dancers will open their fan mail," Alterman said, "just like the Yankees.") Then he took me to the fourth and fifth floors, with the rehearsal studios: a big one, about the size of BAM's stage, where the company often performs, and also a medium and a little one. The studios will be used both for rehearsals and for the company's new school. They will also provide performance space for Morris's smaller, weirder works, pieces that can't fill a regular theatre. At the time of our tour, the building was still far from finished—workmen were banging and making sparks as we passed through—but Alterman was already in love with it. He caressed the unpainted walls. He invited me to admire each phone jack. Having taken me through the fifth floor, he guided me down the staircase and gave me a tour of the other floors all over again. The exterior walls, he told me, have translucent panelling: "At night, people will drive down Flatbush Avenue, and there we'll be—gleaming!"


In "A Garden," Morris finally seems relaxed enough to let a ballet be a ballet.

MARK GAGNON

The gleam is extra. The important thing is the facilities. For twenty years, the Mark Morris Dance Group, like almost all other modern-dance companies in the arts-unfriendly United States, has been operating out of rented studios, with no showers, not to speak of dressing rooms. The company's offices, too, were rented, and crowded, with boxes of wrinkled costumes piled up next to the desks. (Morris himself had no office. He operated off his dinner table.) The M.M.D.G. has long been one of the most esteemed dance troupes in this country and abroad, but it lived like a band of itinerant players. Now, as the new building attests—and as the three-week, five-program, twentieth-anniversary season that the company opened last week at BAM demonstrates even more clearly—it is an institution.

Morris was the most controversial choreographer of the nineteen-eighties. Many people loved him immediately. And many people loathed him, partly because he was a young smart-aleck (there were many who-does-he-think-he-is reviews), but largely, I think, because his work was such a mixed business. On the one hand, he was an eighties personality: ironic, outrageous, heavy into "styles." On the other hand, he was earnest, humanistic, a child of the Great Tradition. Having seen the latter kind of work—dancers in massed choruses, inquiring about the state of their souls ("Gloria," "Stabat Mater")—people didn't understand how he could also do the former kind of work, perform in his underpants, with a paper bag over his head, to parlor songs ("The Vacant Chair"). They thought he was pulling their leg.

Then, in 1988, came a transition. The Morris troupe moved to Brussels, as the resident dance company of the Belgian royal opera house, and stayed three years, during which time it was consistently vilified by the European critics. Morris was a no-talent, they said; the dancers were fat. Morris responded by going back to his Brussels studio and making better work than ever before. From his Belgian years came the now acclaimed "Dido and Aeneas," "The Hard Nut," and "L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato." ("L'Allegro" will be given at the end of the BAM season. It is also the subject of a new book, "Mark Morris' 'L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato,' " edited by Jeffrey Escoffier and Matthew Lore.) For this brave soldiering Morris won a MacArthur fellowship, together with the admiration of many of his former detractors in America. When the company came home, in 1991, he was no longer seen as the bad boy of modern dance. He was a master.

Some people have told me that they miss his old, pre-master period. They liked him naughty. They liked the way that some of his dancers couldn't really dance. It seemed to them sincere. (In Belgium, the company became much more polished.) Others miss the Belgian period, when he was so embattled, and say that since then he hasn't made anything as monumental as "Dido" or "L'Allegro." Pain made him gain, they think. Such complaining is to be expected in the case of artists whose fans feel they own them, by virtue of early devotion. It is also routine with artists who, once counterculture, have been absorbed into the culture. Morris has changed, it is true. The paper bags are gone. (Also, for the most part, the sex-role challenges: the women lifting the men, and so forth.) But such things fall away as young artists grow up and move deeper into their medium. Morris is now forty-four; he has other things to do besides shake his finger at the audience. And the works he has made since returning from Europe—"Grand Duo," "Beautiful Day," "Bedtime," "Lucky Charms," "The Office," "The Argument"—show the same force of imagination as the Belgian works. They are simply not as grand-scaled—no sets, and usually no big orchestras or choruses—because in America Morris lacks the one thing Belgium gave him besides grief: money, the kind of budget Europe accords its artists.

And the story he is telling is the same. First, there are the mixed emotions. In Morris's work, the world is beautiful, and also a nightmare. And the nightmare is not just frightening; it is funny. Second, the work is imbued with classical values, which act as a kind of binder for those mixed feelings. Like Handel or Mozart, Morris favors a firm, harmonious structure; if he didn't, I don't know how we would navigate the dark waters of his work. Third—and this, too, is classical—he shows us nature. Morris does not specify; he generalizes. His work is not about some small, recently discovered, postmodern department of our sensibilities. It is about human experience. He boldly says as much. These are the qualities that have endeared him to his audience: people

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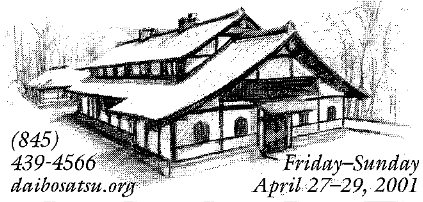

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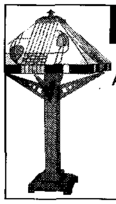
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And there that feathered terrier the sparrow,
Bearing no more than murder in his heart,
Will once more wait to steal the nest and drive
The weaker, more attractive bird away.
So beauty comes each spring and tries to stay,
And so does drab determination thrive.

—*George Bradley*

feel they are being told about their lives.

And there is something more: symbol. When Morris was young, many people likened him to Balanchine. In a way, it was silly to compare this loud, hairy boy to the great, dead Russian master. But in fact the two men had important habits in common; for example, their reliance on music, their practice of making the dance rise out of the score, and also—a trait inseparable from the other—their positing of dance itself as a sufficient mode of communication. Morris has made narrative works (so did Balanchine), but storytelling is not his normal mode. His specialty, like Balanchine's, is to create an image, to music, that will flower in the mind, like music, into complex emotional truth.

Morris sometimes moonlights for classical-ballet companies, and last month San Francisco Ballet presented a new work by him, "A Garden," set to Richard Strauss's "Tanzsuite," an orchestral adaptation of harpsichord pieces by François Couperin, the court musician to Louis XIV. "A Garden" is strange, because it combines the soft, rounded shapes of ballet with something like automatism. Repeatedly, as the dancers are doing their pavanes or sarabandes, they will freeze in place, or do stiff, squatty little pliés, or stare at their shovelled hands, as if they were jointed dolls. What does this mean? Well, it could have something to do with the formality of ballet as seen by a modern-dance man, or the courtliness of Couperin as seen by Richard Strauss, or the tinkliness of a harpsichord compared with an orchestra. But by the time we get to the pas de deux, for Damian Smith and Joanna Berman, such thoughts seem trivial. When we first see the two dancers, they are standing crumpled over, he on top of her, in a sort of blob. Then they rear back. Smith lays a big, splayed hand on Berman's solar plexus and lifts her into the air, against his chest. Her legs unfold, then her arms. What was chaos becomes design, relationship. Their intimacy is no sooner established than it is checked. They do a parallel dance; they keep their distance; we're back at court. Again and again, however, the formality is breached, and at the end the opening lift is reprised, only this time, more hair-raisingly, Smith picks Berman up—big hand again, total capture—from the stomach. Watching this, you no longer think about what Couperin means to Strauss. The dance has become something larger, something about the space we place between ourselves and others, and the violence and satisfaction of crossing it.

"A Garden" is not perfect. It doesn't have an ending. (This sometimes happens with Morris, as if he felt he had already told us too much. Or maybe he just gets lazy.) After the pas de deux, there's a brief group number, in which Berman and Smith dance with different partners—how could they?—and then the lights go out. But you can't have everything. This is the most serious ballet Morris has ever made—indeed, that anyone has made in the last decade. And what a boon his sensitivity to music is here. As Berman and Smith fight their way out of distance, Strauss's violins loft them, predict their union. We sit and watch, drop-jawed.

In the past, Morris's ballets, though always interesting, were his least confiding works. They were full of resistance: Morris showing *you* that, yes, he knew about ballet, he was trained in ballet, but he was damned if he was going to let ballet boss him around. Now, it seems, he is past that and, the automatisms notwithstanding, willing to let a ballet be a ballet, with all those *steps.* "A Garden" is full of sparkling combinations, which seem to breathe the pleasure he took in creating them. (And his love of the San Francisco dancers. This is his fourth piece for them.) There is a fast, dainty solo for the excellent Tina LeBlanc that looks like a toy made for a princess, by Fabergé. But the proof of Morris's relaxation in this piece is his willingness to follow the ballet convention of supplying a central pas de deux, one that distills the meaning of the work. Classical dancers are bred for such pas de deux, but, in nine prior works for classical companies, he had never given them one. Now he has.

Morris is the most exciting modern-dance choreographer in the country. Could he become our most exciting ballet choreographer as well? It seems too much. Yet several nights a week I go to the ballet and see something bad or not so bad. The people in the audience clap a little bit, to thank the dancers; then they grab their coats and race for the cabs. After "A Garden" they clapped for a long time, as if to keep the show from ending. Then they sat back in their seats, absorbing it. ♦

THERE'LL ALWAYS BE AN ENGLAND
From the London Times.

Merchant sailors have downed spoons and are refusing to cook puddings for their officers as part of a campaign for more leave.

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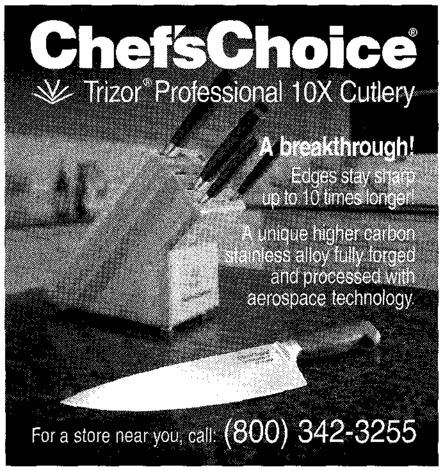
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THE THEATRE

PRISONERS OF ENVY

Fear and self-loathing in Mexico and Manila.

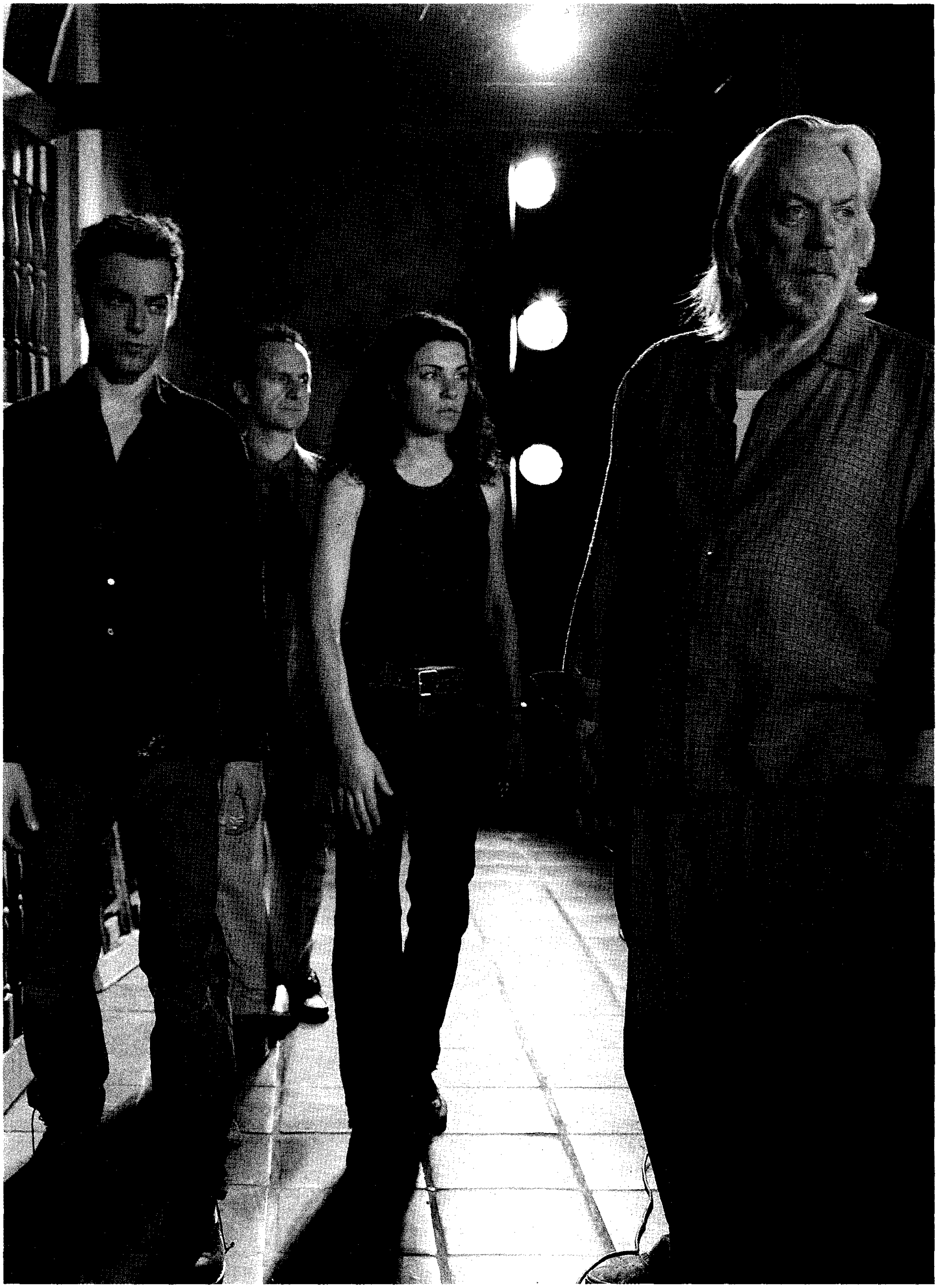
BY JOHN LAHR

"In a consumer society, there are inevitably two kinds of slaves: the prisoners of addiction and the prisoners of envy," the sociologist Ivan Illich said. Jon Robin Baitz, in his cunning and elegant play "Ten Unknowns" (at Lincoln Center's Mitzi E. Newhouse Theatre), manages to get both halves of Illich's equation under the same corrugated-tin roof in Mexico, where the hard-drinking seventy-two-year-old artist Malcolm Raphelson (the superb Donald Sutherland) has been holed up for twenty-eight years, a figurative painter in retreat from what he calls the "thieves' market of abstraction."

On the surface, the scenic clutter of Ralph Funicello's set—a jumble of brushes, pots, crates, and canvases—has the feel of an artist's oasis, with its solace of work. But to trap envy and to demonstrate the deviousness with which it both generates and denies its murderous feelings—a roiling double whammy of malice and mortification—Baitz must first trap us. Thanks to a marvellous cast, the unassuming authority of Daniel Sullivan's direction, and Baitz's own deft storytelling, the audience is conned in the same seamless way that the envious trick themselves into not seeing their own vicious feelings.

When the curtain comes up, Raphelson's art dealer, a half-toady half-tyrant called Trevor Fabricant (the harassed and hilarious Denis O'Hare), is putting a full-court press on his client to have a New York retrospective. He has lined up two rooms in a swank gallery; he has buyers; and he has a concept—one room for the new work and one for the old (he produces a poster from Raphelson's last New York show, "Ten Unknowns of 1949"). What Fabricant doesn't have is Raphelson's consent. "Isn't it time to be recognized?" he asks the artist. "Not as a paragraph in some notices—but an actual full-fledged celebration?" But the more Fabricant pushes, the more Raphelson stonewalls him with principles—his perfectionism ("I don't think these things are exactly what I want them to be") and his rejection of American celebrity ("I have worked hard not to be bitter"). He won't even show Fabricant one of his new paintings ("Not quite ready"), and he browbeats him for his "mercantile art business crap," adding, "You will do me the favor of not discussing me as though I were some sort of shiftless *subcontractor*." Sutherland makes Raphelson's curmudgeonly integrity fetching. With his long white hair and his angular face furrowed with deep lines as if painted by Rouault, he ambles around the stage in paint-spattered sneakers, bantering, drinking, opining about life and art—a compelling, eccentric, romantic figure.

Into this Bolshie hubbub Baitz deals two wild cards: Julia Bryant (the centered Julianna Margulies), a biology student working with a threatened local species of frog, and Raphelson's shaggy, mordant assistant, Judd Sturgess (Justin Kirk), Fabricant's former lover and a "past master in squandered gifts," who is taking a break from "heroin, Ecstasy, show people" to babysit the artist and keep him working. Lost and louche, as Kirk plays him, Judd is a terrific character, hiding his weakness behind a strong suit of sarcasm. Kirk, who has heavy-lidded eyes and a mischievous mouth, gives Judd's mocking lines a fantastic spin. "Calm down. Nobody hates you. Even though it would be so easy," he tells the near-hysterical Fabricant. Baitz understands that the purpose of this snideness is to neutralize provocation—"You refuse to argue," Fabricant complains—and he writes it well; its indirection serves at first to discount Judd and then to explain him. When Judd asks Raphelson to defend him to Fabricant, all the painter can manage is "He's great. He's got strong arms. He's good at lifting and mixing and chattering." "Is that something you'd be willing to put in a letter of recommendation when I leave here?" Judd asks. "Are you nuts?" Raphel-



Jon Robin Baitz's "Ten Unknowns" at Lincoln Center: Justin Kirk, Denis O'Hare, Julianna Margulies, and Donald Sutherland as a hard-drinking seventy-two-year-old artist in retreat from the "thieves' market of abstraction." Photograph by Jason Schmidt.

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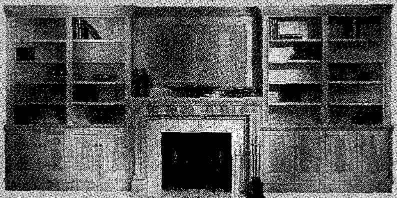

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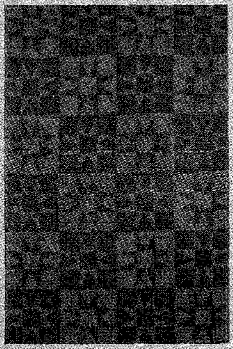

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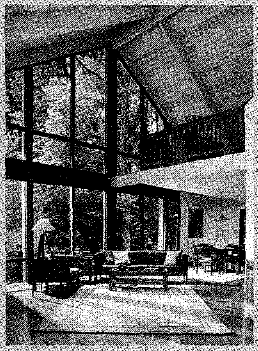

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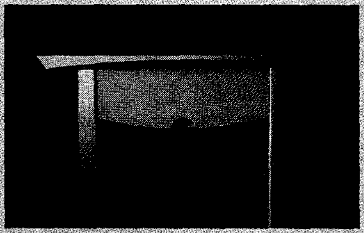

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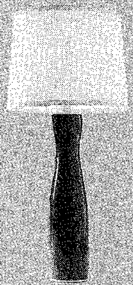

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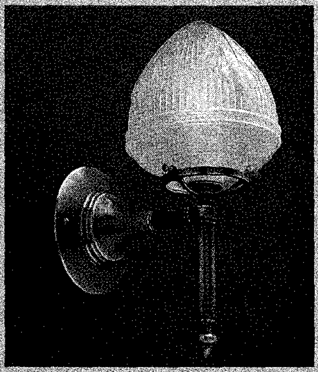

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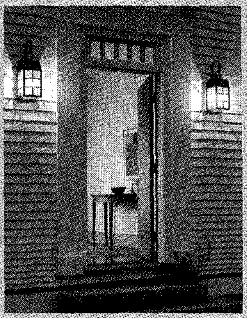

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son swaggers. "You think I'm gonna give you *anything*, kid?" Judd counters, "I can't even take a painting when I leave?" Raphelson waits a beat, then tells a story about Rauschenberg asking de Kooning for a drawing. "De Kooning obliged him. A lovely piece. And Rauschenberg spent ages *erasing* it. Taking great care in obliterating it entirely. True story, this."

Raphelson comes back to this idea at the finale of the first act: "It's just like you're waiting to erase me!" he tells Judd as he finally gets down to some painting. Judd hands Raphelson a brush, then crouches behind the painter like a caddie coaxing his client to make the right approach. "Right there," he whispers. "Just go to it." But Raphelson can't make the gesture. He seizes up, his hands tremble, he's petrified. He has literally lost his touch. "*Take the brush, for Christ's sake*," he says. When Judd balks, Raphelson adds, "All I am asking you to do is take up some slack, do your goddam job!" Judd does as he's told, and in that shocking moment the audience intuits what the next act makes clear—Judd, not Raphelson, has made the new paintings. We see what Raphelson can't: that his principles, his retreat to Mexico, every convincing posture of word and deed have been mobilized to push the feelings that are within him onto other people. "He's at a crossroads. And he could either become a real actual person. Or someone who never grows into their skin": this is Raphelson pinning the tale of his own alienation on Judd. The painter is in exile not from an artistic ideology but from his own envy. Raphelson, it turns out, *is* a subcontractor. It's Raphelson, not Judd, who's doing the erasing. The painting Judd asked for as a parting gift is *Judd's*. And what Raphelson acts out over the new canvas is not creation but annihilation, a fulfillment of envy's deepest desire: to rob the other of his power.

In the second act, Raphelson is allowed to wriggle and roar with rationalizations, but he is eventually disabused of his claims of authorship by Julia. "It's impossible, you know," he tells her, finally coming clean, "to come back to painting when you've been gone from it for any length of time. . . . It's just never done." In the interests of a satisfying commercial ending, the play then glibly begs the question of Judd's "proprietary issues" and of the nature of such symbiotic collaborations, which so often begin in allegiance and end in alienation (the demented first Mrs. T. S. Eliot; the murdered Joe Orton). As fascinating as the play is, by making Raphelson's paintings so overt an imposture Baitz renounces whole areas of emotional and moral drama. What we're offered instead is a pinch of melodrama (Judd ends up back on drugs and goes AWOL), some spice of confrontation when the subject of acknowledgment is briefly raised, and finally a sacrifice (together, Raphelson and Judd cut up the works and deep-six them in the lake where the frogs, too, have self-destructed)—a gesture that works its spiritual magic and brings a kind of grace. The day after destroying the work, Raphelson announces that he has drawn something: a sketch of a dog. "You can have it," he tells Judd. This is the play's last line, and an act of generosity and liberation that sets a sort of record for stage-managed redemption.

There is no redemption for the Philippines in Jessica Hagedorn's adaptation of her celebrated 1990 novel, "Dogeaters" (at the Public). Political corruption and American pop culture have turned a tropical paradise into a media whispering gallery. With its delirium of talk shows, movies, beauty pageants, discos, Catholicism, and capitalism, the nation's imagination has been colonized by the West, and the indigenous has all but disappeared. What remains is a kind of cultural ventriloquism, the equivalent of the lip-synching they do at a Manila club called, natch, Studio 54. Hagedorn sees the Philippines as a soap opera, and the metaphor is right (until recently, the country's President was the former action-movie hero Joseph Estrada). It's Michael Greif's sluggish production that is wrong. "Dogeaters" calls itself "kaleidoscopic"—if only it were as fluid and as colorful. But it has no racing pulse or dreamlike frenzy; instead, it's a series of plodding, adequately acted snapshots, written in a kind of acrylic prose, which bring the phantasmagoric and the historical together in one heavy-handed, camp package. (They play "Twilight Time" twice, for God's sake.) In his standup act, Lenny Bruce once joked that "Filipinos come quick." I don't know anything about that. But "Dogeaters," I can tell you, takes a long, long time. ♦

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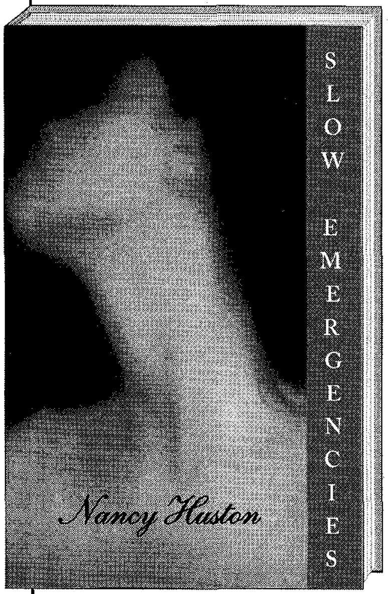

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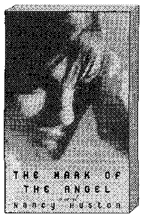

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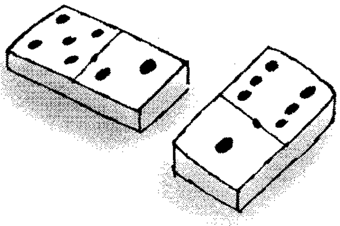
Father of the Four Passages, *by Lois-Ann Yamanaka (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $23).* Sonia Kurisu is a young woman with a peck of troubles: a penchant for junkies, a bitchy sister, a low-life job as a lounge singer, and a young son who won't speak. Set in Hawaii and Las Vegas, Sonia's saga alternates between memories of her unhappy past and the slings and arrows of her present predicament. But this ostensibly depressing story becomes, in Yamanaka's hands, a scrappy, scathingly funny, openhearted tale of a pigheaded heroine who asks only for a glimmer of grace, and—once in a while, through dint of hard work—gets it.

Gabriel's Story, *by David Anthony Durham (Doubleday; $23.95).* In this moving first novel, set in the eighteen-seventies, Gabriel, a fifteen-year-old black boy from Baltimore, resents his new life on the Kansas plains when his widowed mother marries a homesteader. But then he falls in with a charismatic cowpunch and horse thief, and as they travel west to New Mexico a series of violent episodes brings Gabriel to swift maturity. The moral gravity of Durham's narrative is offset by his attentiveness to the primacy of nature in the Western landscape: "They were in a country open to sky, moving vulnerably beneath it, closer to God and more insignificant for it."

Treason by the Book, *by Jonathan D. Spence (Viking; $24.95).* Is it possible to find out where rumors come from? Sometimes. In early-eighteenth-century China, Emperor Yongzheng deployed his vast bureaucracy to ferret out the origins of certain slanderous statements. The gossip proved to be part of a disinformation campaign run by rebels bent on overthrowing his dynasty. He quashed it by publishing a volume of some of the rebellious writings that had inspired the malcontents, along with rebuttals by a team of scholars, and then distributed it throughout his enormous empire as compulsory reading—the Little Red Book of its day. In this fascinating detective story, many aspects of Qing society seem startlingly modern, such as the government's use of spin control and affirmative-action quotas.



On Her Own Ground, *by A'Lelia Bundles (Scribner; $30).* Bundles's great-great-grandmother Madam C. J. Walker founded a cosmetics empire in the early nineteen-hundreds. Born in 1867 to former slaves on a Louisiana plantation, Walker was working as a laundress in St. Louis in the eighteen-nineties when she began losing her hair. First, she developed the scalp ointments that would make her rich; then she established a network of black women to use and sell the products, who went on to escape poverty as she had. After years of contributing to black charities and anti-lynching campaigns, she died in her Westchester mansion, not far from the Rockefeller estate. The author's extensive research and unemphatic style encourage readers to find their own relation to this exemplary American figure.

The Adversary, *by Emmanuel Carrère, translated from the French by Linda Coverdale (Metropolitan; $22).* In 1993, Jean-Claude Romand, a successful French doctor, seemed devastated when his family was killed in a house fire; then police found evidence of blunt trauma on his wife's skull, and dug bullets out of his children. Soon, the truth began to surface: Romand was not a doctor at all, and he had murdered his family to conceal a web of lies that extended across almost two decades. Carrère's account of this true crime, with its mixture of anecdote and essay, recalls Heinrich Böll's "The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum." But Böll's novel was fuelled by its puckish sense of humor and grim view of human nature—here everyone, except for Romand himself, is painfully, and even fatally, naïve.

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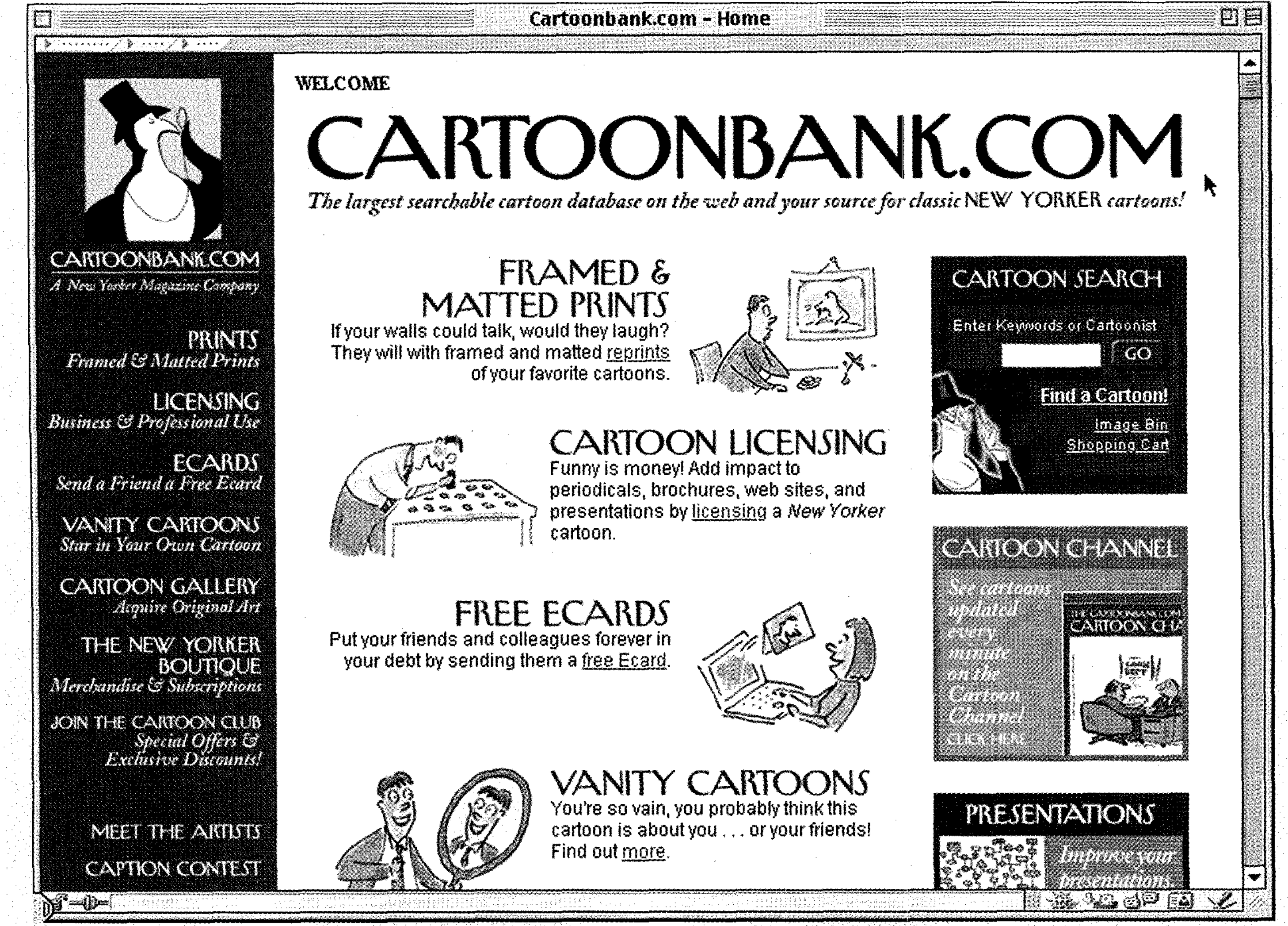

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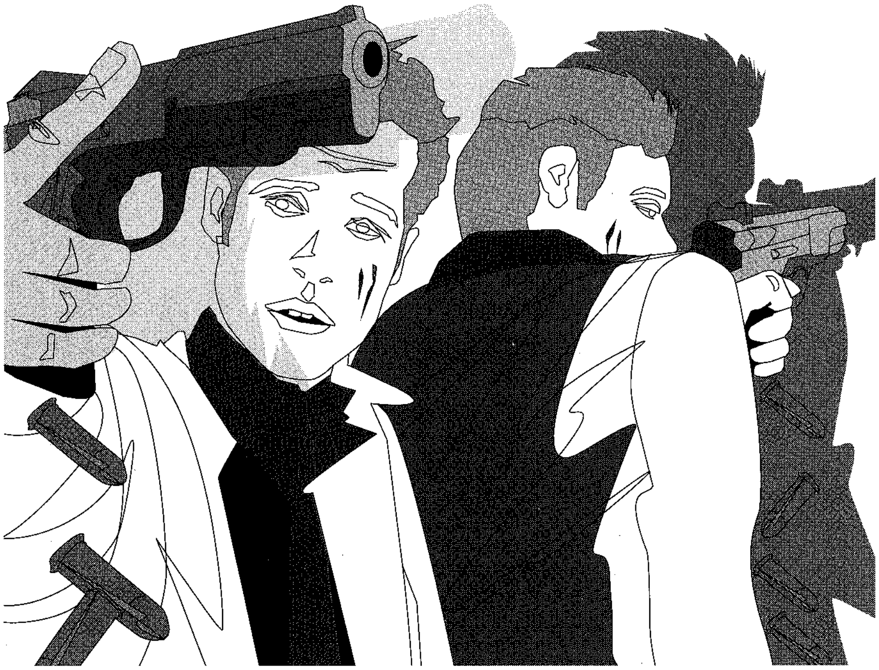
THE CURRENT CINEMA

HOW DID I GET HERE?

Memory games in "Memento" and five films by Truffaut.

BY ANTHONY LANE



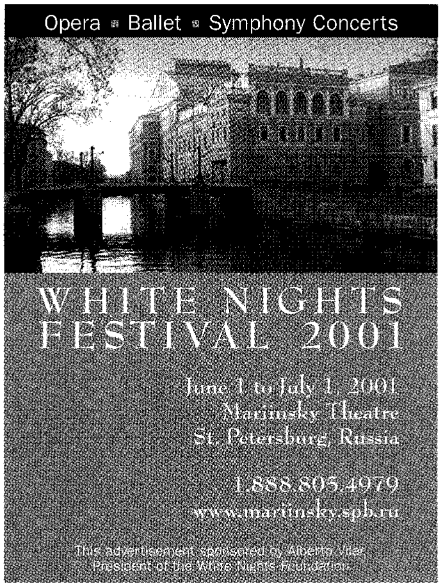
Guy Pearce as a man who doesn't know what he's doing from one minute to the next.

ULLA PUGGAARD

This is going to be tricky. I first saw Christopher Nolan's "Memento" a couple of months ago, and could make neither head nor tail of it. I saw it again last week and felt a lot better; only three or four more viewings, and I should be able to understand the tail. The head, I fear, must remain a mystery, because "Memento" is a thriller with a difference: backward runs thing whole the, see you.

The star is Guy Pearce, the onetime Australian soap actor with cheekbones modelled on the front end of a Corvette. He swanned to prominence in "Priscilla, Queen of the Desert," and a certain femininity—nothing draggy, just a fine-tuning of the emotional radar—lingered in his portrayal of Ed Exley, the virtuous young cop in "L.A. Confidential." This time, in the role of Leonard, he sports a clipped, slightly sniggering American accent and a stiff blond quiff, as if someone had sneaked up in the night and planted barley on his skull. Not that Leonard would notice, for, as he never fails to inform people, he has a condition: his short-term memory is gone—missing in action, when his head got slammed against a bathroom mirror. At the time, he was trying to protect his wife, who was raped and murdered by a person or persons unknown.

Or not. That is one version of events, but, as we plunge deeper into the film, no version holds more water than any other. Nolan, the thirty-year-old Englishman who wrote and directed "Memento," is no help at all, being far too busy breeding entire hatcheries of red herrings; as for Leonard, who needs to solve the murder, he doesn't know what he's doing from one minute to the next. A bartender named Natalie (Carrie-Anne Moss) pours him a beer; as Leonard looks on, she spits in it, then waits awhile and brings it over to his table. He thanks her and sips it with relish; the knowledge that it is tainted goods has vanished, like froth, from the surface of his brain. In earlier days, Leonard was an investigator for an insurance firm; now he is hard at work on the case of the damaged self. To this end, he turns himself into a six-foot personal organizer—



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bearing photographs in his pockets like lucky charms, taping memoranda to his body, and inking his arms and trunk with a roster of tattooed facts. Not all of this makes sense; he has to remind himself to shave, yet he still knows how to drive a car. But "Memento" is so swift and sly, like a pickpocket frisking your jacket, that you don't have room for questions.

Nolan made a strong début, three years ago, with a film called "Following," and this time he has decided, with the arrogance of youth and a bigger budget, to toss everything into the pot. Memory loss, you might argue, is treacherous enough as a dramatic hook, yet Nolan not only doubles but squares the complexity, by recounting the plot in reverse. The first thing we see is a Polaroid image of a dead man; in the course of the credits, it starts to fade—an inimitable trick, quite dazzling in its economy, for telling us that time is running the wrong way. We see a gun leap into a man's hand, and I briefly braced myself for a gamut of inversions—bicycles backpedalling, coffee pouring itself neatly into pots, the pulling of a vicious punch. It never happens; Nolan contents himself with a series of overlapping scenes, each of which—and here I am speaking only to those with doctorates in quantum physics—ends where the previous one began. Piece of cake.

The question has to be: What does the formula add up to? "Memento" arrives in this country on a wave of rolling rumor; you get a real kick from trying to ride it, and, given the choice between a movie so smart that it leaves me feeling like an idiot and a movie that was made by idiots in the first place, I know which I'd take. What is more, the desperation of Leonard's quest seems to burn into the landscape of his inquiries; the setting is Los Angeles, though not the green and sprinkled playground that Pearce patrolled in "L.A. Confidential" but a wasted array of gasworks and cut-rate motels, all backwater and no oasis. The sunlight is tired and dusty, like the characters it shines on, and the weight of Leonard's ritual behavior has none of the bracing, improvisational air that lifted "Groundhog Day"; what could have been a comic device spools around in a tape loop of living death. "Memento" would be no fun to watch on your own; go with friends, and then try to work the whole thing out over dinner. Remember: check, coffee, dessert, entrée, appetizer, and a final Martini. With a twist.

On March 17th, you can watch a man grow up. You can do it again the next day—backwards, in the style of "Memento." It won't take long: twenty years in seven hours, which seems a pretty good deal. Anthology Film Archives is screening five films by François Truffaut, all of them starring Jean-Pierre Léaud as Antoine Doinel, Truffaut's alter ego. This is not a new idea; in the nineteen-seventies, the Dagmar theatre, in Copenhagen, gave Danish audiences the chance to see the first four Doinels—"The 400 Blows" (1959), "Antoine and Colette" (1962), "Stolen Kisses" (1968), and "Bed and Board" (1970)—in a single day, a schedule that inspired Truffaut, he claimed, to make a fifth and final installment. "Love on the Run" duly came out, in 1979.

The Doinel of "The 400 Blows" looked and behaved like a teen-age Truffaut: difficult, dreamy, not so much resentful of authority as unable to grasp why on earth he should submit to it. As the films progressed, the physical resemblance between the director and his creation grew spooky; they were both of slender build, with a triangular face designed for Puck-strength grins, and the one thing that could stop them from gazing at women in the street was the promise of a movie theatre around the next corner. But something happened to Antoine's insolence; the roughened figure who is seen frozen, with a sort of hopeless hope, against the ocean at the close of the first movie emerges, in "Antoine and Colette," in tie and sports jacket, calmly attending classical-music concerts and cultivating an eccentric fondness for other people's parents, often preferring them to their beautiful daughters. (Truffaut himself never knew his father.) What became, you want to ask, of the roaring boy? Where did he go? I suspect that he

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retreated to the shelter of his own mind; the rhythm of the later films is no longer headlong but lilting, and you feel Antoine agreeing to shake hands with life, or at least duck nimbly out of its path, instead of rapping it with his fists. When, at the start of "Stolen Kisses," he is given a discharge from the military (as happened to Truffaut), the amusement that twitches Antoine's features seems not so much insubordination as the flicker of a secret, interior joke. Though "Stolen Kisses" was released in 1968, you'd never know it. The movie summons little more than a Gitane-fuelled disappointment with the colorless—dare one say the uncinematic—shape of reality.

Does the quality of the filmmaking, too, subside with the leakage of time? "Bed and Board" seems especially slight, with Jean-Pierre Léaud's jerky, deadpan manner hinting at genuine indifference. The director's former friend and collaborator Jean-Luc Godard, with whom his relations rotted into a sad exchange of insults, declared that Truffaut had "made one film that truly expressed him, 'The 400 Blows,' and that was it: afterward, he merely told stories." Only Godard, of course, would suggest that storytelling was a bad habit, and it would be more generous to say that Truffaut preferred scraps of stories, mini-plots that break as easily as hearts; Antoine can barely hold down a job, or stay faithful to one woman, and the most tender moment in seven hours comes when he strokes the hair of a tall young hooker. (Truffaut was a dedicated brothelgoer; for him, all love was made on the run.) If the intensity of the young Antoine seems frittered away, which of us can honestly lay claim to a life that goes from strength to strength? The patchwork of flashbacks in "Love on the Run," stitched with clips from the earlier films, reminds me of the ending of "Sentimental Education," when Flaubert's hero sits with an old friend and remembers visiting a whorehouse, long ago, and running away in fright. "That's when we were happiest," they agree, and Antoine, too, was never more true to himself, more likely to pluck pleasure out of the air, than in the fiascoes of his youth. That's Truffaut for you, I guess: no other director had such a complete, instinctive grasp of what it is to be young, or such a shy, limited sympathy for the task of growing old. ♦

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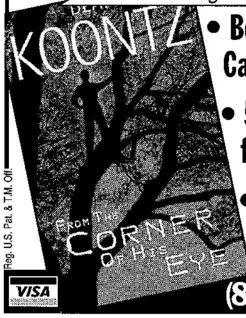

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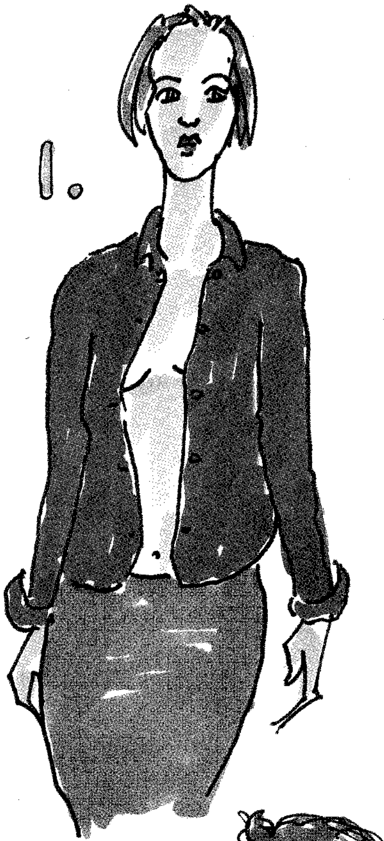
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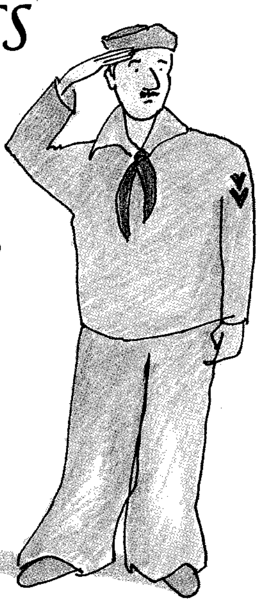
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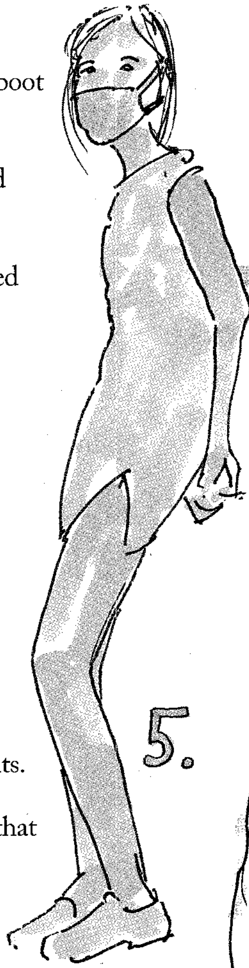
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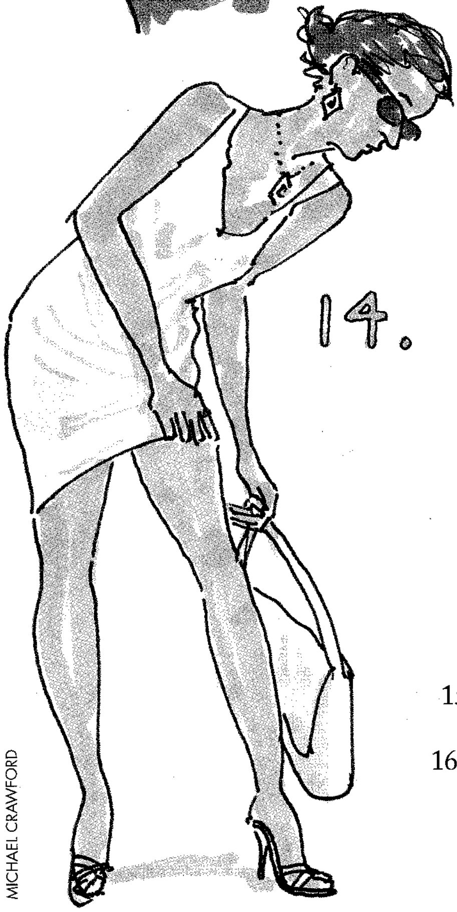
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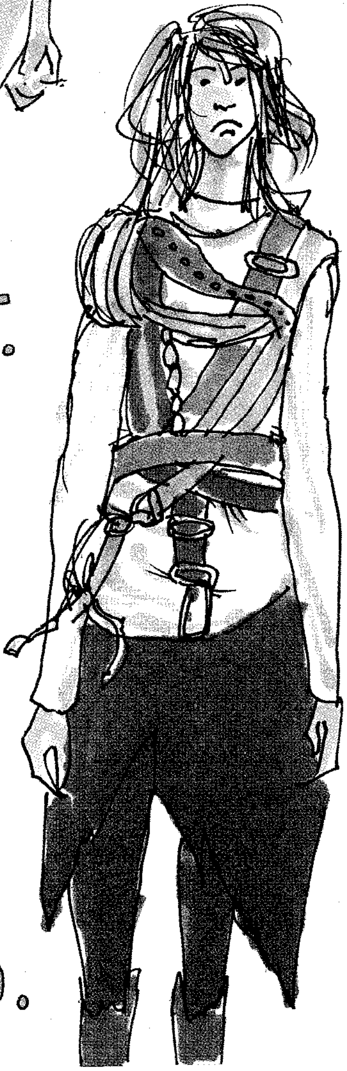

10.

1. A blouse that costs more than five thousand dollars can never be called "easy."

2. A coat that requires the death of a herd, the overtime of a sweatshop, and six months of an assistant editor's salary can never be called "clean."

3. The pant, the jacket, and the half-boot can only be worn by the idiot.

4. Anyone young can never afford anything called "young."

5. Only a surgeon should be allowed to use the phrase "The return of the important leg."

6. Pink is the navy blue that will get you dishonorably discharged.

7. As a designer, Puffy should insist that a handgun is merely an accessory to a crime.

8. PETA is the only acceptable reason to wear fur.

9. Agoraphobia is the only appropriate response to leather pants.

10. Being "fashion forward" means that you get to look ridiculous first.

11. The word "modern" always sounds "vintage."

12. The only really new fragrance would be called Calvin Klein's Litigation.

13. "Classic American style" would involve an elastic waistband.

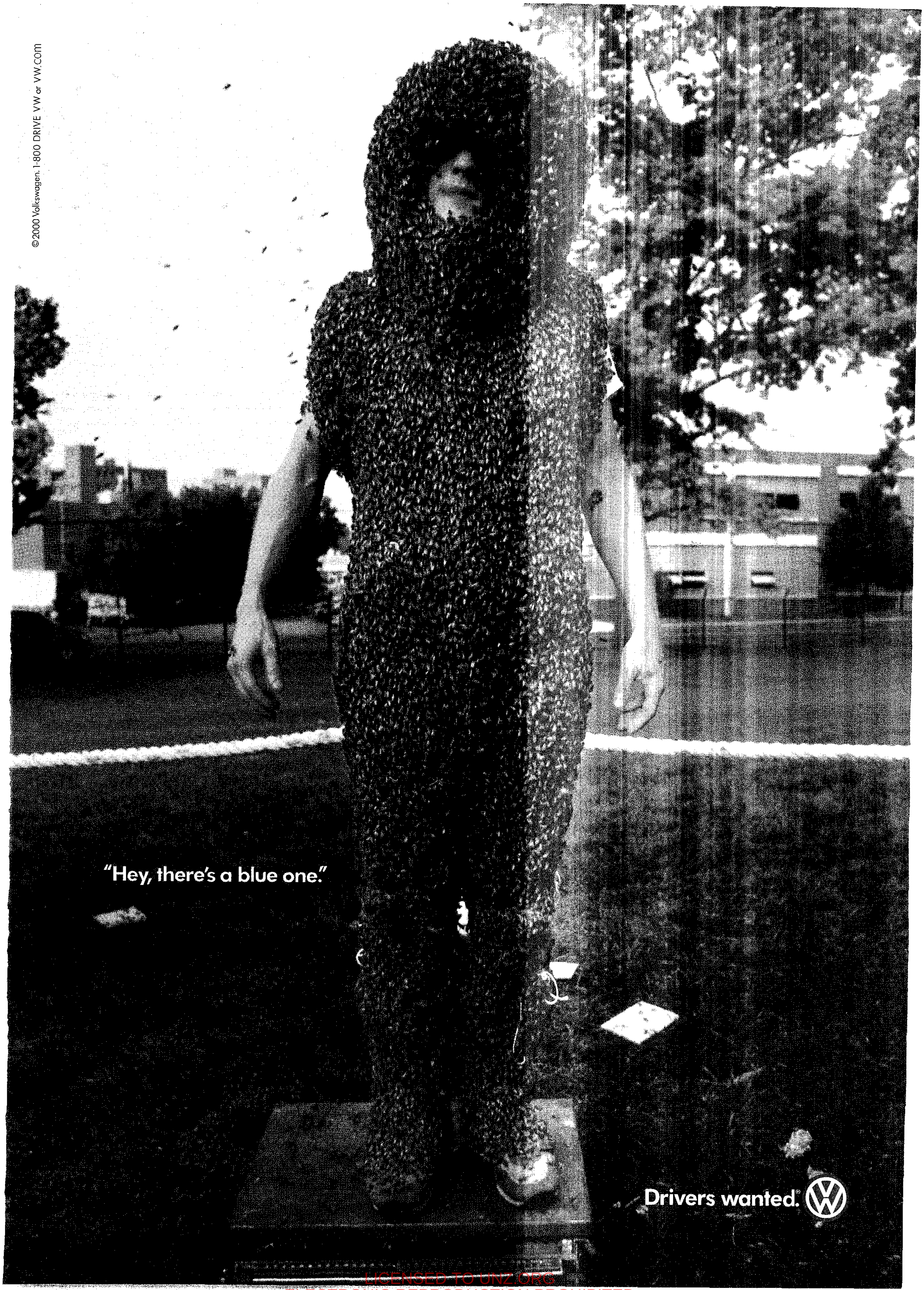
14. You should never wear white after Labor Day, or a meal.

15. "Seasonless" means it will never look good.

16. Just because you're wearing clean underwear, that doesn't mean we have to see it.

17. The only real "wardrobe basic" is a rich husband.

MICHAEL CRAWFORD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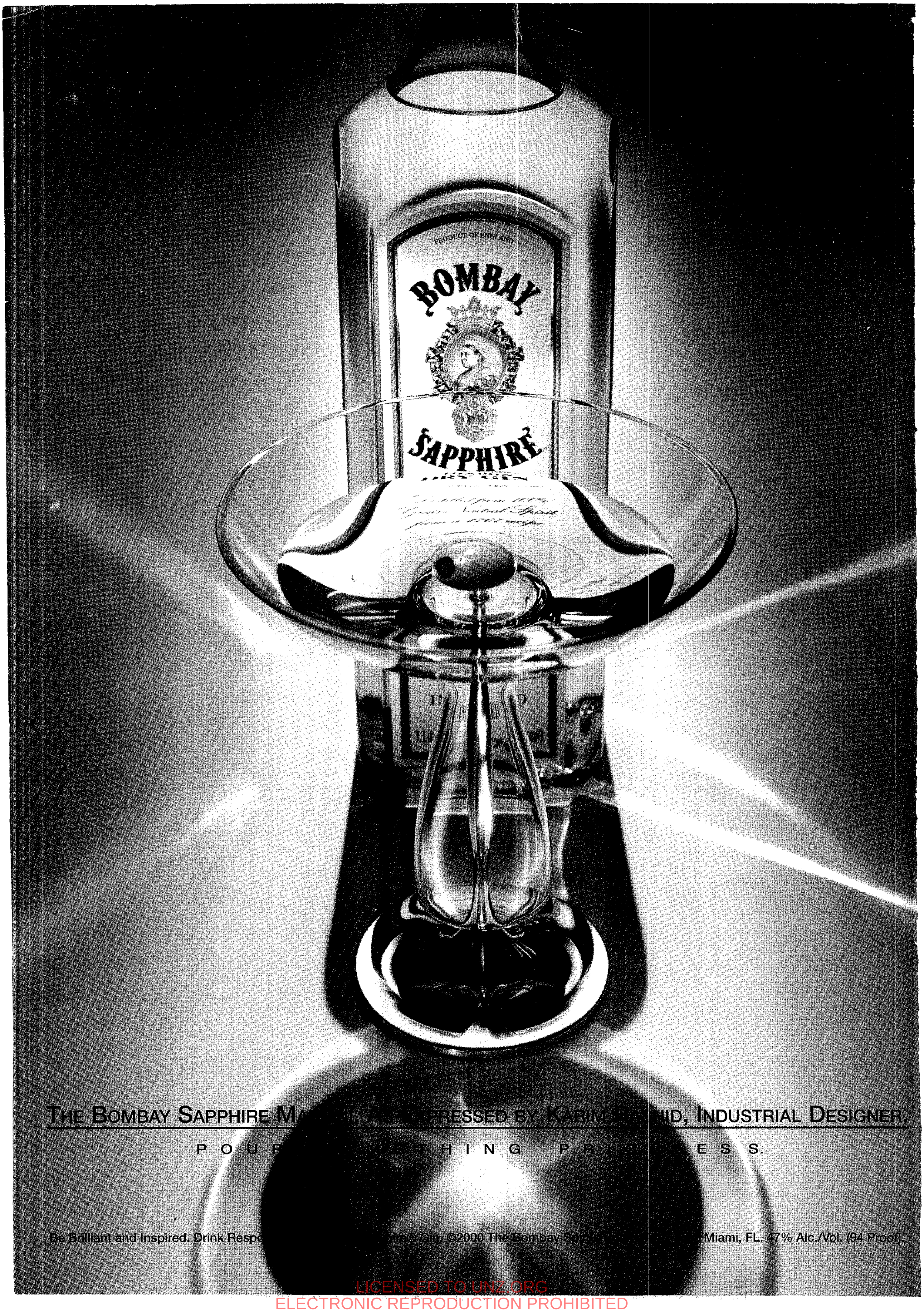
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